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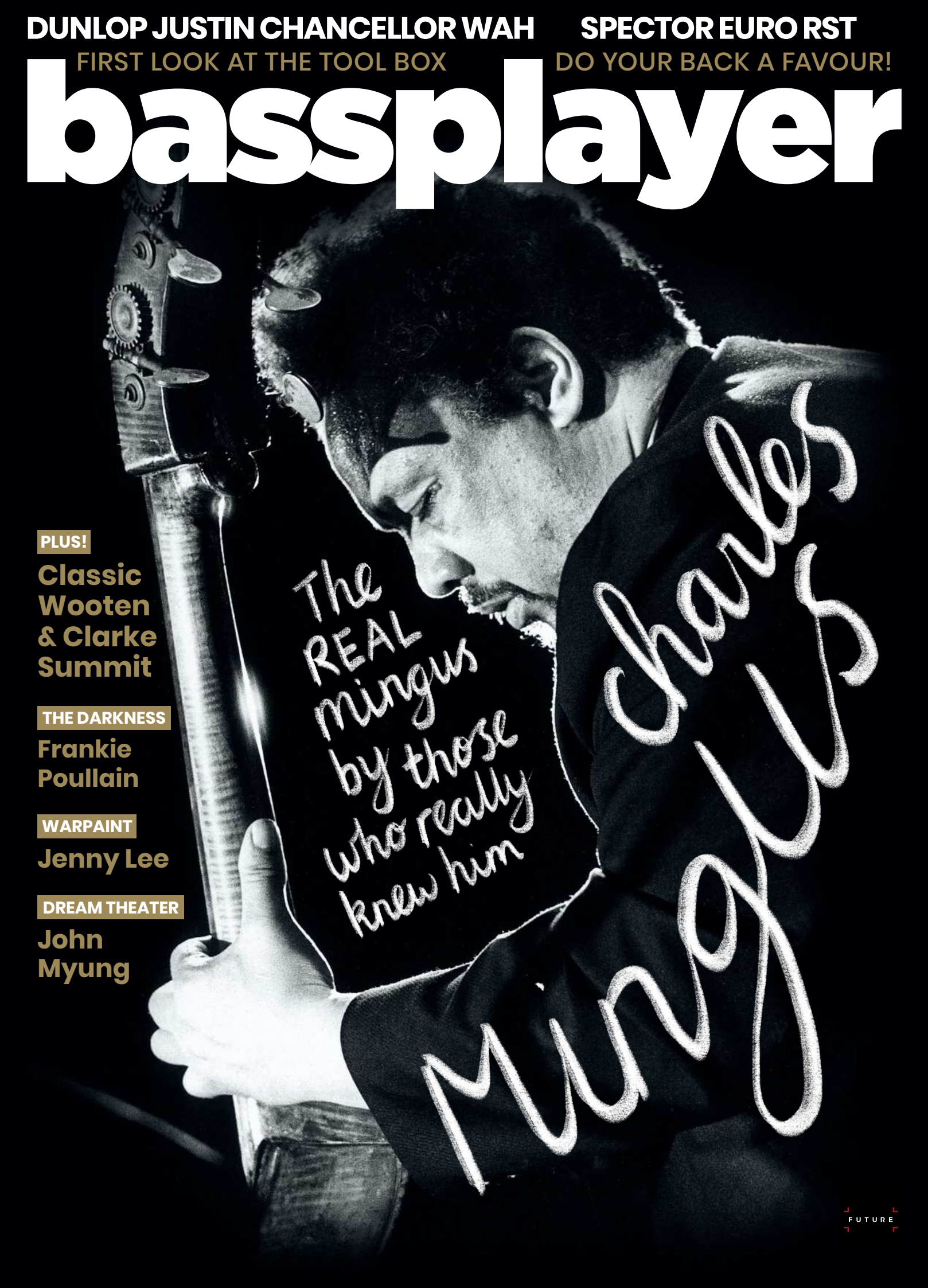


PLUS!

Classic Wooten & Clarke Summit

THE DARKNESS

Frankie Poullain

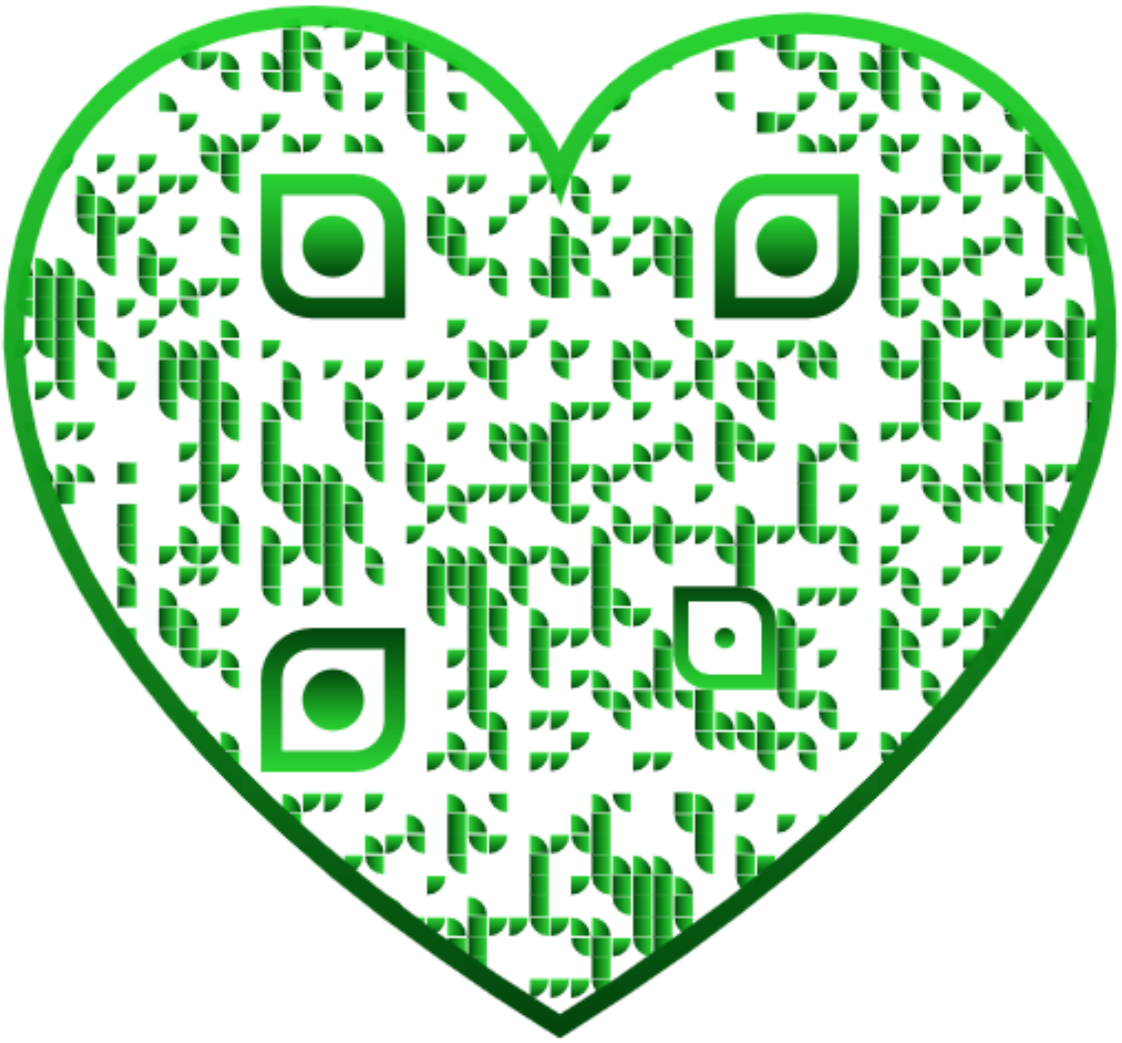
WARPAINT

Jenny Lee

DREAM THEATER

John Myung

FUTURE



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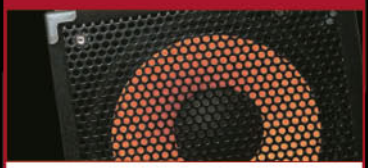
4 String Basses

19278 - Cort Action Junior Bass, Black OPB
21466 - Cort Action Junior Bass, Black Cherry
16156 - Cort Action PJ OPB, Open Pore Black
15379 - Cort B4 Plus Artisan 4-Strings Bass
23038 - Cort GB24JJ Sunburst
23039 - Cort GB24JJ Trans Black
21598 - Cort GB54JJ 4-String Bass, Olympic White
21493 - Cort GB64JJ Natural
15242 - Cort Jeff Berlin Rithimic 5 String Bass
12807 - Cort Jeff Berlin Rithimic 4 String Bass
18184 - Epiphone EB3 Bass, Black, Secondhand

Fender

21578 - Fender 60thRoad Worn Jazz Bass, Sunburst
21756 - Fender 60th Anniv RW J Bass, F.Silver
22007 - Fender 60thRoad Worn Jazz Bass, O.White
22370 - Fender 75th Anniv. Jazz Bass, Diamond
22368 - Fender 75th Anniv Precision Bass Diamond
18047 - Fender Am. Original 60s Jazz Bass, CAR
22449 - Fender American Professional II Jazz Bass
22352 - Fender American Professional II Jazz Bass,
22615 - Fender Am Pro II Precision Bass Sunburst
22705 - Fender Am Pro II Precision Olympic White
22826 - Fender American Professional II, Limited Ed.
19238 - Fender Flea Active Jazz Bass Silver
23086 - Fender Player Jazz Bass Fretless S.burst
21660 - Fender Player Jazz Bass, Sunburst
22818 - Fender Player Plus Jazz Bass Belair Blue
22956 - Fender Player Plus P-Bass, Silver Smoke
21755 - Fender Player Precision Bass, Sunburst
21847 - Fender Player Precision Bass, PolarWhite
19503 - Fender Vintera '60s Jazz Bass, Firemist
22836 - Fender Vintera 60s Jazz Bass Daphne Blue
22567 - Hagstrom Swede Bass in Black
22581 - Hagstrom Viking Bass, Tobacco Sunburst
11189 - Hofner HCT Shorty Bass, Black
19420 - Hofner HCT Violin Bass, Sunburst
23041 - Hofner Ignition "Cavern" Violin Bass, Sunburst
12188 - Hofner Ignition Violin Bass, Sunburst
13328 - Hofner Violin Bass Ignition Black
22533 - Hofner Ignition Club Bass, Sunburst
22986 - Ibanez Ergodyne EDB600, Dark Violin, Used
23095 - Lakland Skyline Hollowbody Sunburst Used
22148 - Levin Deluxe LB50-TRD Bass Guitar
22112 - Levin Deluxe LB60 Bass in High-Glo Nat
22113 - Levin Deluxe LB76-SB Bass in High-Glo SB
22111 - Levin LB60 Bass Guitar in High-glo Black
22146 - Levin PB50-BK Bass in High-Glo Black
22147 - Levin PB50-SB Bass in High-Glo Sunburst
18114 - NS Design WAV4 Double Bass Trans Black
13012 - Rickenbacker 4003, Walnut
18077 - Rickenbacker 4003S Bass Guitar Mapleglo
18078 - Rickenbacker 4003S Bass, JetGlo
18079 - Rickenbacker 4003S Bass Guitar Fireglo
23091 - Sandberg California 2 Lionel Short Scale
22624 - Sandberg California II VS 4-String Bass
22628 - Sandberg Electra TT4 RW Bass Guitar
22627 - Sandberg Electra VS4 RW Bass Guitar
23059 - Sire Marcus Miller V7 Bass, White Used
22897 - Squier Affinity PJ Bass Lake Placid Blue
14360 - Squier Affinity PJ Bass, Olympic White
16680 - Squier Affinity P Bass PJ Pack, Black
23065 - Squier Affinity Precision Bass PJ, Black
18933 - Squier C. Vibe 60s Jazz Bass Fretless
21278 - Squier Classic Vibe 60s Jazz Bass Sburst
21274 - Squier Classic Vibe 70s Jazz Bass, Nat
21604 - Squier Classic Vibe 70s P. Bass, Walnut
22863 - Squier CV 50s Precision Bass Sunburst
22885 - Squier FSR CV Late 50s P Bass, W. Blonde
23008 - Sterling by Music Man Short Scale, White
22775 - Traveler Guitars TB4P Bass
22779 - Traveler Guitars Ultra-Light Bass
14778 - Vintage ICON V74MRJP Fretless, Sunburst
14407 - Vintage LVJ74 Lefthanded Bass Guitar, Natural

Bass Cabinets



13640 - Aguilar SL112 Bass Cabinet
16800 - BLUGuitar Nanocab
13566 - Eden EGRW1264 Head & Cab Package

EICH AMPLIFICATION

16054 - Eich 110XS Bass Cabinet 4 Ohm
16055 - Eich 110XS Bass Cabinet 8 Ohm
16042 - Eich 112XS Bass Cabinet 8 Ohms
16041 - Eich 112XS Bass Cabinet 4 Ohms
16075 - Eich 115L Bass Cabinet
16052 - Eich 115XS Bass Cabinet 4 Ohm
16053 - Eich 115XS Bass Cabinet 8 Ohm
16040 - Eich 1210S Bass Cabinet
16071 - Eich 210M Bass Cabinet
16069 - Eich 212L Bass Cabinet
16070 - Eich 212M Bass Cabinet
16048 - Eich 212S Bass Cabinet 4 Ohm
16050 - Eich 212S Bass Cabinet 8 Ohm
16068 - Eich 410L Bass Cabinet
16067 - Eich 610L Bass Cabinet
16061 - Eich 612XL Bass Cab
16065 - Eich 810L Bass Cabinet
16321 - Gallien Krueger CX115 Bass Cabinet
16444 - Gallien Krueger CX210 Bass Cab

Mark bass

5476 - Mark Bass STD104HR (4x10)
6241 - Mark Bass STD102HF (2x10)
6242 - Mark Bass STD104HF (4x10)
5477 - Mark Bass STD151HR (1x15)
9033 - Markbass Traveler 121H Bass Ext Cab
9034 - Markbass Traveler 151 P Bass Guitar Cab
4733 - Mark Bass Traveller TRV102P (2x10)
16013 - Markbass 123 Alain Caron Bass Cab
16014 - Markbass CMD S. Combo K1 Alain Caron
17732 - Markbass Marcus Miller Cab 102
5431 - Mark Bass NY121 New York 1x12 Bass Cab
10412 - Markbass NY122 2 x 12 Bass Cab
10409 - Markbass NY151 1 x 15 Bass Cab
10410 - Markbass NY151 RJ 1 x 15" Randy Jackson
15272 - Markbass New York 122 Ninja Bona Cab

ORANGE

6259 - Orange OBC115 (1x15)
10266 - Orange OBC210 Bass Guitar Speaker Cab
6260 - Orange OBC410H (4x10)
5241 - Orange OBC810 (8x10)
23026 - Phil Jones Bass C4 Compact Bass Cab
21040 - D'Addario Planet Waves 5ft Speaker Lead
20753 - Stagg 10M Speakon-Jack Lead
20754 - Stagg 10M Spk-Spk Lead (SSP10SS15)
16856 - Trace Elliot 1x10 Elf Cab
19686 - Trace Elliot TE28E 2x8 bass cabinet

Bass Combos

13577 - AER Amp III Bass Amp Combo
5627 - AER Amp One (200W, 1x10)
21842 - Ashdown Studio 12
22943 - Ashdown Studio 15 Bass Amp Combo
22731 - Ashdown Ashdown Studio Jnr
13566 - Eden EGRW1264 Head & Cab Package

EICH AMPLIFICATION

16046 - Eich BC112 Bass Combo
19163 - Eich BC112 PRO Bass Combo
16028 - Eich BC112 Bass Combo

Fender

13497 - Fender Rumble 100 Bass Amp Combo
4238 - Fender Rumble 15 (15W, 1x8)
15113 - Fender Rumble 25 Bass Amp Combo
13083 - Fender Rumble 40 Bass Amp Combo

GK GALLIEN-KRUEGER

23058 - Gallien Krueger BL115 Backline,Used
16765 - Gallien Krueger MB110 Bass Combo

Mark bass

6239 - Mark Bass CMD102P Bass Combo
5472 - Mark Bass CMD151P J Berlin 300W
5429 - Mark Bass Covers For Mark Bass Amps
6240 - Mark Bass Mini CMD121P (300W, 1x12)
18371 - Markbass Marcus Miller CMD101 Micro60
18372 - Markbass Marcus Miller CMD 102 250
18370 - Markbass Marcus Miller CMD 102 500
9940 - Markbass Mini CMD 151 Jeff Berlin
9939 - Markbass MiniMark 802 Bass Combo
16764 - Markbass 102 250 Richard Bona Bass
19729 - Markbass Ninja 102-500 Combo
9938 - MicroMark 801 Bass Combo

ORANGE

15715 - Orange Crush Bass 100 Combo
15716 - Orange Crush Bass 25 Combo
15714 - Orange Crush Bass 50 Combo
23007 - Orange Crush Bass 50 Glenn Hughes
22889 - Phil Jones BG400 Suitcase Compact
22786 - Phil Jones Bass Double Four BG-75

Bass Heads

14618 - Aguilar Tone Hammer 500 Bass Amp Head
22741 - Ashdown ABM-300-EVO IV Head, Bass Amp
18848 - Bergantino Bi Amp
18854 - Bergantino Custom Padded Carry Bag
18850 - Bergantino Forte Bass Amplifier
21556 - Bergantino NXT210 Bass Cab
13566 - Eden EGRW1264 Head & Cab Package
16044 - Eich T1000 Bass Amp
16043 - Eich T300 Bass Amp
16027 - Eich T500 Bass Amp
16026 - Eich T900 Bass Amp
18116 - GR Bass One 800 Pre-Owned
16319 - Gallien Krueger MB500 Fusion Bass Amp H

Mark bass

14828 - Mark Bass Nano Mark 300 Bass Amp Head
10408 - MarkBass Bass MultiAmp Stereo
6243 - Mark Bass Little Mark III Bass Head 500w
19081 - Mark Bass Little Mark III Bass Head USED
9035 - Markbass Little Mark III Tube Bass Head
9256 - Markbass Big Bang 500W Bass Head
19484 - Markbass Evo 1 Bass Amp Head
17254 - Markbass Little Marcus 1000 Bass Amp
17252 - Markbass Little Marcus 250 Bass Amp Head
17009 - Markbass Little Marcus 500 Bass Amp Head
17010 - Markbass Little Marcus 800 Bass Amp Head
9941 - Markbass Little Mark 250 Head Black
15271 - Markbass Little Mark Ninja Bona Head
19282 - Markbass Little Mark Vintage Bass Amp Head
9944 - Markbass MultiAmp
15151 - Markbass Randy Jackson TTE501 Bass Head

ORANGE

6261 - Orange AD200 MK3
8231 - Orange Dark Terror Valve Guitar Head
19674 - Orange Little Bass Thing Bass Amp Head
5351 - Orange Terror Bass 500 TB500
16531 - Trace Elliot Elf 200 Watt Bass Amp Head

5 & 6 String Basses

22612 - Charvel Pro-Mod San Dimas Lambo Green
22538 - Cort A5 Beyond Open Pore Bubinga Natural
10232 - Cort GB35J BK 5 String Bass, Black
16526 - Cort GB75 5 String Bass, Black
21970 - ESP LTD RB1005 Rocco Prestia, Used
16766 - Ibanez SR30TH5PII Premium, 5-String Bass
22085 - MTD Kingston Z 5-String, Sunburst, Used
19381 - Marleaux MBass 5 String Bass, Burl Top
23068 - Overwater Custom 5 String Bass, Red

Rickenbacker

21654 - Rickenbacker 4003S 5 Bass Guitar Jetglo
21655 - Rickenbacker 4003S5 String Bass Mapleglo
22626 - Sandberg California II TM 5-String Bass
23090 - Sandberg California II VM 5 String, Marley Blue
19775 - Shine 5 String Bass, Trans Blue, Used

Spector

19735 - Spector Bass Rebop 5DLX Blck Cherry
16773 - Spector Coda 5 Pro Trans Black
11196 - Spector Bass Legend 5 Classic Blk Cherry
22523 - Spector Bass Leg 5 Cl Blk Cherry Lefty
12406 - Spector Legend Custom 5 String, Amber
19158 - Sterling by MusicMan SubRay 5 Bass, HBS
6448 - Westcoast JB5, Trans Amber
8999 - Yamaha RBX5A2 5 String Bass, Black
4889 - Yamaha TRB1005J Bass, Natural

Fretless Basses

23086 - Fender Player Jazz Bass Fretless S.burst
22718 - Magic Fluke Timber Electric Bass Ash
14867 - Magic Fluke Timber Electric Bass
18933 - Squier C. Vibe 60s Jazz Bass Fretless
14778 - Vintage ICON V74MRJP, Sunburst

Acoustic Basses

23099 - Cordoba Mini II Bass MH-E Mahogany
15117 - Takamine GB30CE Electro-Acoustic Blk

Electric & Silent Basses

14014 - Yamaha SLB100 Silent Upright Bass
19938 - Yamaha SLB300 Silent Double Bass

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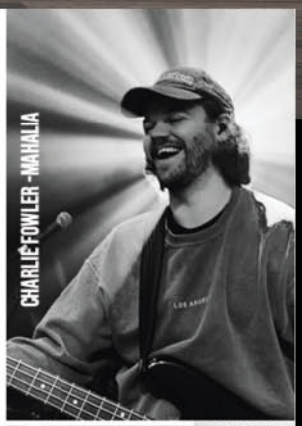

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WELCOME

Forty years since Charles Mingus left us, who has equalled him?

When the great upright bassist Charles Mingus died in 1979 at the age of 56, he had packed more into that relatively brief lifespan than any of us will, even if we live to 100. Mingus would have been a centenarian himself if he'd made it to 2022, the perfect opportunity for us to reassess his life and work. A complicated genius whose towering creativity was only matched by his skill on his instrument and the extremes of his character, Mingus was unique, in the world of bass as in any other. We may never fully understand his mission, but we certainly benefit from his otherworldly music.

Our primary objective at *BP* is to celebrate all aspects of our community, so in this issue we meet a whole range of bassists, from heavy metal titans via funk veterans to rockers of all stripes. Jenny Lee, Joshua Crumbly, Victor Wooten, Stanley Clarke, John Myung, Frankie Poullain, Stu Hamm and Robert Trujillo all feature in the value-packed magazine you're reading, and that's before we even meet our team of world-class bass educators, advisers and gear testers.

These accomplished bass players are here with a single goal: to equip you with the skills and know-how that you'll need, whether your goals are to conquer the lighted stage, master online music, compose and play the right parts, or just jam with a band. They know, you know and I know that there is no more fundamental, more life-affirming instrument than ours... and let no-one tell you otherwise.

Enjoy this issue, and I'll see you next month!

Joel McIver, Editor

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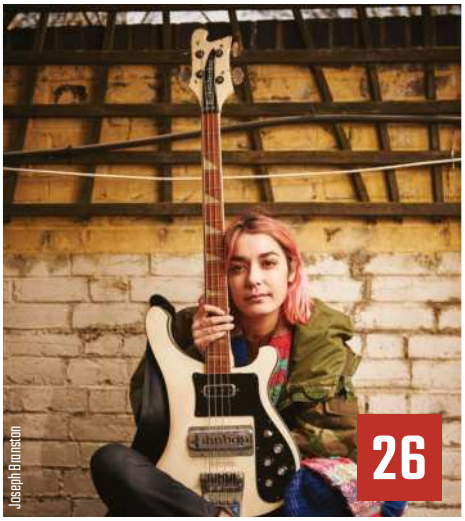

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bassplayer

Future PLC, Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA, UK

Editorial
Editor **Joel McIver, joel.mciver@futurenet.com**
Art Editors **Rosie Webber, Mixie Von Bormann, Philip Cheesbrough, Mark White**
Managing Editor **Stan Bull**
Technical Consultant **Stuart Clayton**
Content Director, Music **Scott Rowley**
Group Art Director **Graham Dalzell**
Head Of Design (Music) **Brad Merrett**

Contributors
Antonio Angotti, Mike Brooks, Rich Brown, Stuart Clayton, Rob Elrick, Steve Lawson, Ryan Madora, Phil Mann, Ellen O'Reilly, Nik Preston, Dr Nichole Rustin-Paschal, Joe Shooman, Dan Veall

Cover images
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Photography
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Advertising
Media packs are available on request
Chief Revenue Officer **Zack Sullivan**
UK Commercial Sales Director **Clare Dove**
Advertising Sales Director **Lara Jaggon**
Account Sales Director **Guy Meredith**
guy.meredith@futurenet.com

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Subscriptions
Enquiries **help@magazinesdirect.com**
UK orderline and enquiries **0330 333 1113**
Overseas order line and enquiries **+44 (0)1604 251045**
Online orders **www.magazinesdirect.com**
CRM Director **Louise Dudfield**

Circulation
Head of Newstrade **Tim Mathers**

Production
Head of Production **Mark Constance**
Production Project Manager **Clare Scott**
Advertising Production Manager **Joanne Crosby**
Digital Editions Controller **Jason Hudson**
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Management
Senior Vice President, Tech, Games & Ents **Aaron Asadi**
Brand Director **Stuart Williams**

Printed by Buxton Press

Distributed by Marketforce, 5 Churchill Place, Canary Wharf, London E14 5HU, www.marketforce.co.uk. Tel: 0203 787 9001

ISSN 2634-1875

Bass Player (UK), ISSN 2634-1875, March, Issue 419 is published monthly with an extra issue in November by Future Publishing, Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA. UK. The US annual subscription price is $175.37. Airfreight and mailing in the USA by agent named World Container Inc, c/o BBT 150-15 183rd St, Jamaica, NY 11413, USA. Application to Mail at Periodicals Postage Prices is Pending at Brooklyn NY 11256. US POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Bass Player (UK), World Container Inc, c/o BBT 150-15 183rd St, Jamaica, NY 11413, USA. Subscription records are maintained at Future Publishing, c/o Air Business Subscriptions, Rockwood House, Perrymount Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 3DH, UK.

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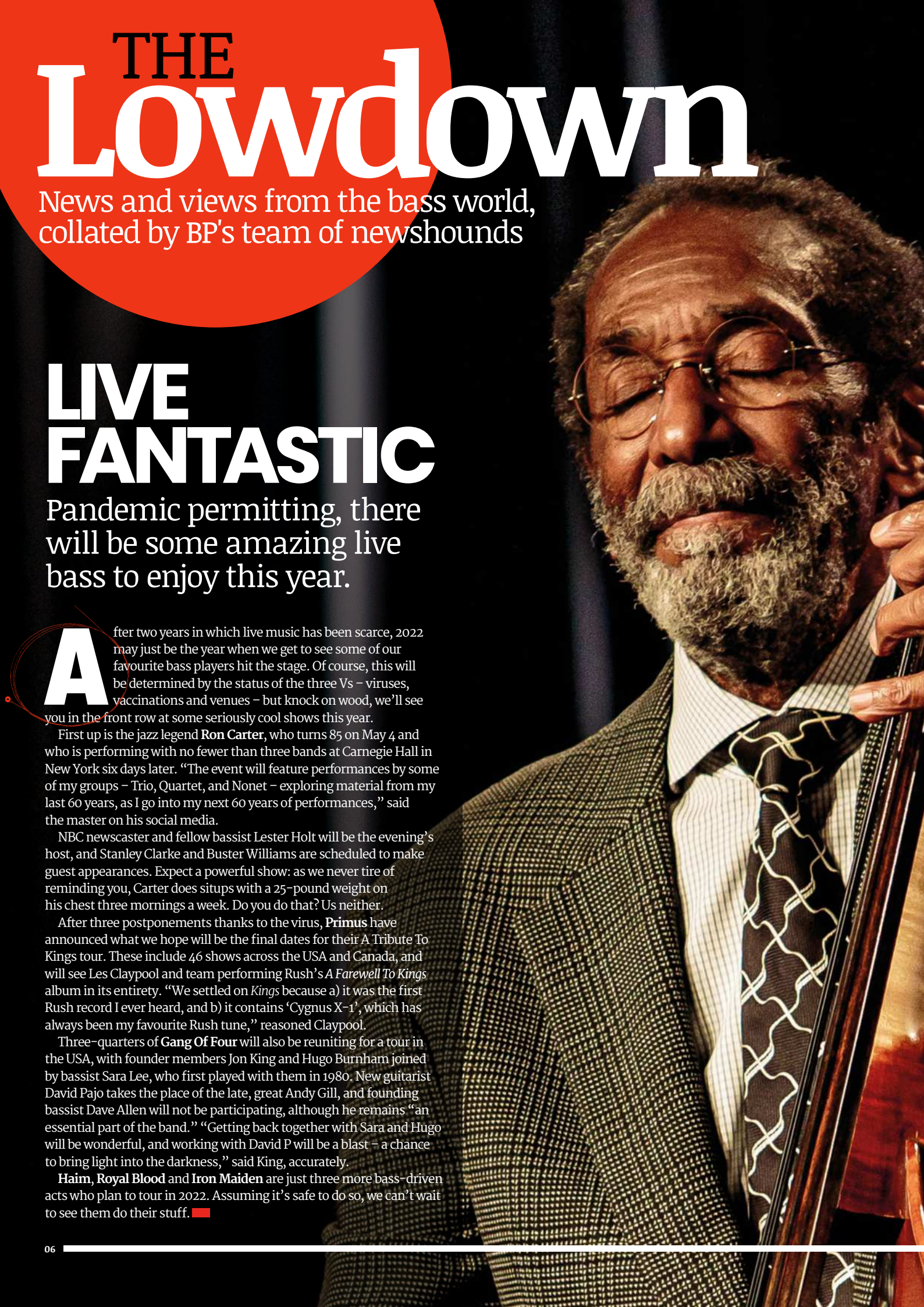
THE Lowdown

News and views from the bass world, collated by BP's team of newshounds



LIVE FANTASTIC

Pandemic permitting, there will be some amazing live bass to enjoy this year.

After two years in which live music has been scarce, 2022 may just be the year when we get to see some of our favourite bass players hit the stage. Of course, this will be determined by the status of the three Vs – viruses, vaccinations and venues – but knock on wood, we'll see you in the front row at some seriously cool shows this year.

First up is the jazz legend **Ron Carter**, who turns 85 on May 4 and who is performing with no fewer than three bands at Carnegie Hall in New York six days later. "The event will feature performances by some of my groups – Trio, Quartet, and Nonet – exploring material from my last 60 years, as I go into my next 60 years of performances," said the master on his social media.

NBC newscaster and fellow bassist Lester Holt will be the evening's host, and Stanley Clarke and Buster Williams are scheduled to make guest appearances. Expect a powerful show: as we never tire of reminding you, Carter does situps with a 25-pound weight on his chest three mornings a week. Do you do that? Us neither.

After three postponements thanks to the virus, **Primus** have announced what we hope will be the final dates for their A Tribute To Kings tour. These include 46 shows across the USA and Canada, and will see Les Claypool and team performing Rush's *A Farewell To Kings* album in its entirety. "We settled on *Kings* because a) it was the first Rush record I ever heard, and b) it contains 'Cygnus X-1', which has always been my favourite Rush tune," reasoned Claypool.

Three-quarters of **Gang Of Four** will also be reuniting for a tour in the USA, with founder members Jon King and Hugo Burnham joined by bassist Sara Lee, who first played with them in 1980. New guitarist David Pajo takes the place of the late, great Andy Gill, and founding bassist Dave Allen will not be participating, although he remains "an essential part of the band." "Getting back together with Sara and Hugo will be wonderful, and working with David P will be a blast – a chance to bring light into the darkness," said King, accurately.

Haim, **Royal Blood** and **Iron Maiden** are just three more bass-driven acts who plan to tour in 2022. Assuming it's safe to do so, we can't wait to see them do their stuff.

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Main pic: the great Ron Carter in full flow; (above) Les Claypool in a Rush to get back on stage; (top) Sara Lee of Gang Of Four

© Sergione Infuso/Corbis via Getty Images

THE Lowdown

New Ibanez SR and BTB models

Eleven new basses coming.

Japanese luthiers Ibanez have added limited-edition SR Standard, SR Premium, multi-scale BTB basses and an AEG-shape acoustic model to the 2022 line-up. The seven new limited-edition SR Standard and SR Premiums celebrate the SR's 35th anniversary, and each category carries a host of appointments such as the multi-scale fretboards of the BTBs, the nyatoh bodies of the 35th anniversary SR Standards and the flamed maple tops of the celebratory SR Premiums.

The new BTB models feature five-piece maple/walnut necks with graphite reinforcement rods, bound panga panga fretboards and Ibanez's newly developed T1 bass humbucker pickups. Other universal specs include MRS5S bridges, black hardware, a custom three-band EQ and a 37" scale length on the B string.

Yama-how much?

Macca's Wings BB breaks records

At the Music Rising charity auction last December, Sir Paul McCartney's tour- and studio-played Yamaha BB-1200 'Wings' bass sold for an astounding $496,100. The event, organised by U2 guitarist The Edge and producer Bob Ezrin, raised over $2 million in total, and also saw the sale of guitars played by Rush, Radiohead, Lzzy Hale and Slash. Macca's BB bass was the first record-breaking bid of the night, and overtook Bill Wyman's 1969 Fender Mustang, which sold in 2020 for $384,000, then the most expensive bass sold at auction.

ASSUME NOTHING

Chloe Peacock challenges received bass wisdom...

Welcome back to another Assume Nothing column! It's been a busy couple of months in my own musical world, with Unkle Bob getting together to spend a joyous few days recording overdubs and finishing touches for the new record. We're keeping all our fingers and toes crossed that we'll be able to play some shows to celebrate it this year.

This month's conversation is one with Lottery Winners bassist Katie Lloyd. As the sole female in her band, she says: "There have been countless times when I've been left standing with a hand unshaken, while the show rep or sound engineer greets the boys and asks, 'Is it just you three guys?' Or the security guard who asks to see my wristband – because surely I'm not a band member."

These accounts give me so many flashbacks to my own experiences, often from fellow professionals. While it's understandable if the venue team don't know who you are, the fact that they assume that any men must be in the band while assuming that women are simply girlfriends starts to grate after the 100th time. Katie tells us that she tries to laugh it off: "When you're playing to people who actually appreciate you, it's wonderful!"

We quite agree. Want to join the conversation? Get in touch! Instagram: @assume_bassplayermag

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PHIL CHEN RIP

The great Doors and Rod Stewart bassist remembered

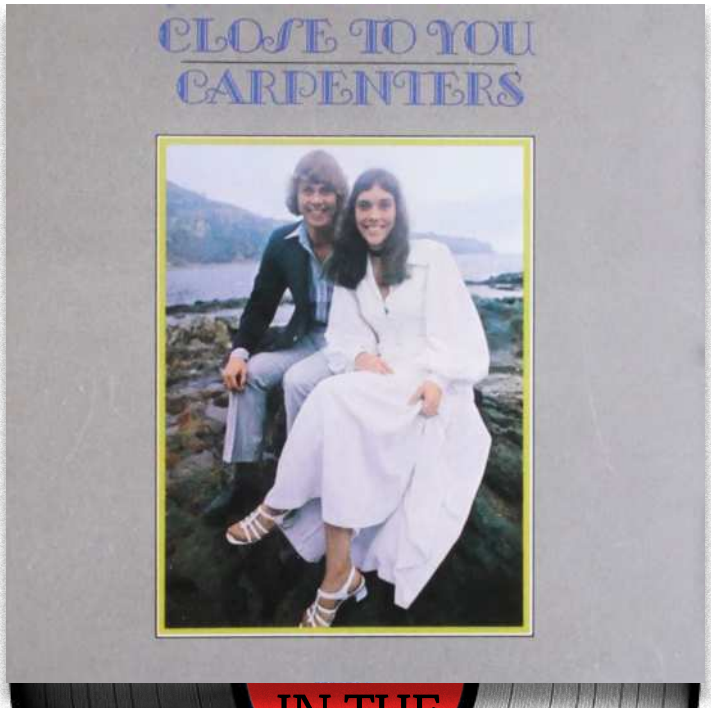
The Jamaican bassist Phil Chen died in December at the age of 75, after a long and prolific career with some of the world's most prominent musicians. "Phil had soul," says John Densmore, drummer of The Doors. "When I met him, it was clear he disliked rock'n'roll, even though he was considering joining a rock band with Robby Krieger and me. He was a James Jamerson dude. His heroes were Motown players.

"Bass players and drummers are brothers and sisters, working in the basement, cookin' up the groove," he adds. "Phil's great feel was a combination of funk and reggae. He was unique that way; he could do both. We were recording in London with a new band, after Jim Morrison had passed, when Phil asked if there was any possibility of finishing the album in Jamaica so he could see his mom. We went, and musically, it was life-changing. We were exposed to reggae before it came to the States.

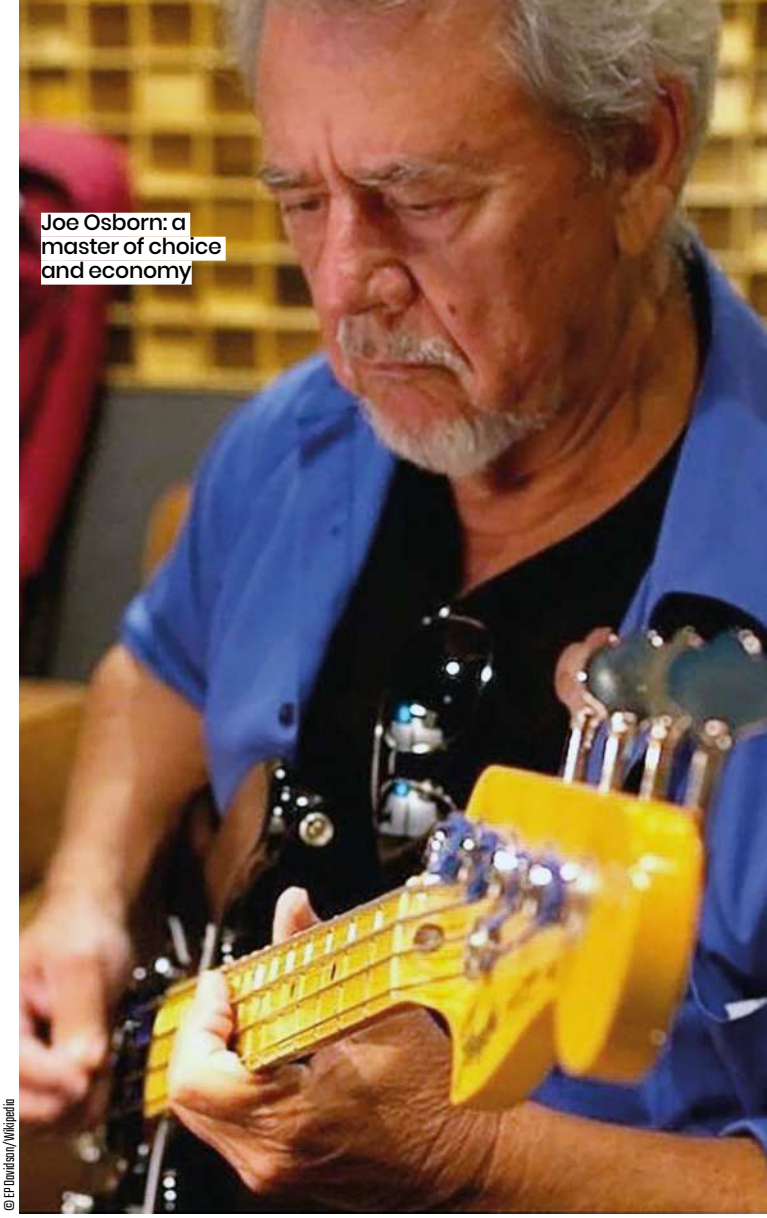
"Well, Phil did jump into rock'n'roll with both feet. He played with us for a couple of years and then joined the Rod Stewart Band. Why he didn't get a royalty cut of 'Hot Legs', like drummer Carmine Appice got, is lost on me. As a top session player, Phil played with an amazing list of artists: Pete Townshend, Eric Clapton, Ray Charles, Jeff Beck, Jerry Lee Lewis, Bob Marley, Jimmy Cliff, and Jackson Browne."

> **"It was clear Phil disliked rock'n'roll, even though he was considering joining a rock band with me!"**
> *John Densmore*

Densmore concludes: "When someone passes like Phil, it feels as if something is lost, or missing in this world. He will be missed. I drummed for his crossing."



IN THE
Groove
CARPENTERS
CLOSE TO YOU
(A&M, 1970)



Joe Osborn: a master of choice and economy

© EP Davidsony/Wikipedia

Every month we give a bass-driven album a spin. How does this piano-led slab of heartfelt balladry stand up?

The Carpenters could only have had their heyday in the early Seventies, before punk and metal were born and while everyone was still dazed and confused after the party of the former decade had ended. Sweet as a sugarcube and twice as square, the siblings Richard and Karen Carpenter were dismissed by many critics as a band only grandparents could love, issuing album after album of toothy love ballads.

Nowadays, however, most of us have wised up: we understand that, despite their cheesy image, the Carpenters wrote and recorded fantastic songs, with their career highlights covers of Bacharach & David's '(They Long To Be) Close To You' and Williams & Nichols' 'We've Only Just Begun', both of which featured on the 1970 LP *Close To You*.

Bassists, take note: *Close To You* was another in a long line of albums which prove that the bass guitar shines brightly when deployed in a ballad. Joe Osborn, who laid down the bass tracks on the LP and who played a major role in the Carpenters' early career, knew this and took full advantage.

'(They Long To Be) Close To You' is a slight piano-driven affair with a standard drum beat, some soupy strings and close vocal harmonies, but that's more or less it: there's plenty of space for the bass to move around, and Osborn threw in some superb high-register fills in, around and behind the luxurious swathes of music. His actual bass-line is a three-note piece with a fifth added per note, all of which take place way up high on the fretboard, depending on which key your wedding covers band plays it in.

Elsewhere on *Close To You*, Osborn delivers lines which complement the vocal and piano hooks without dominating them: like singer Karen, who tragically succumbed to anorexia in 1983, he knew how to make a melody stand out without getting in the way of the arrangement. The album remains a masterpiece of judgment and taste to this day.

Close To You is a masterpiece of judgement and taste to this day

© Michael Ochs Archives/Getty

The Albums That Made Me

© Richard Ecclestone/Redferns

THIS MONTH

Stuart Hamm

The unique solo and session star looks back on a fistful of career-defining recordings, from the fast to the frenzied.

The accomplished bassist, composer and educator Stuart Hamm came to prominence through his work with Joe Satriani in the mid-Eighties, both live and on record. The New Orleans-born bassist had met Satriani through Steve Vai while at the Berklee College of Music in Boston. Hamm is noted for his fusion and classical influences and is a master of technique. Whether he is slapping, doing double-handed tapping, playing chordal work, using harmonics or even pursuing a polyphonic approach, a Hamm bass-line is unlike nobody else's. Over the years, he has worked with the likes of Frank Gambale, Steve Smith and Greg Howe, alongside a fascinating set of solo records that range from covers of classical pieces – including Bach and Beethoven – to minimalism, ambient and jazz. Hamm, who also plays piano and sings, has released several instructional videos, and also worked for the Musician's Institute of Hollywood as Director of Bass Programs. Over the years he has played various basses, including an iconic Kubicki, and his own signature Fender Urge model: he was the first ever bassist to receive this accolade from Fender. He's also played his own Washburns and Warwicks. We caught up with this multiple award-winning musician for a chat about five recordings that he regards as memorable, significant or just very cool...

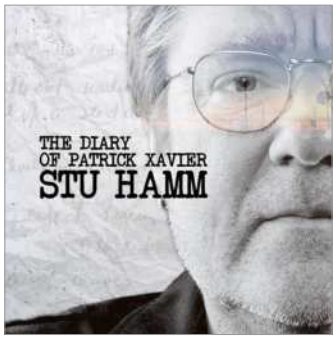
STUART HAMM
Kings Of Sleep (1989)

"The definitive sound of my playing"

"This album has many compositions that people now associate with me. It has the sound of the Kubicki bass, which was really instrumental in my explorations. Tapping, slapping in chords, and all of that stuff really sounds good on that bass. It is the definitive sound of my playing in that period, with 'Black Ice' and a tapped version of 'Prelude In C' by JS Bach. The title track and 'Terminal Beach' are heavy tapping bass pieces, too.

"This record won me *Guitar Player* magazine's Readers' Poll, back when ***Bass Player*** was just an insert in *GP*. In fact, I believe I won Best Jazz Bass Player and Best Rock Bass Player two years in a row. On *Kings of Sleep* there's a song called 'I Want To Know' which explored my jazzier side, and it also had inklings of the ambient side of things that I went on to write later.

"Still, nobody seems to ask me the important questions like 'What is that song about?' or 'What was the inspiration for this song?' They want to know stuff like what kind of strings I play. For me, composing is very personal: each song means something to me. It doesn't become a song until I name it, and until I know what it's about emotionally and intellectually."



STUART HAMM
Diary Of Patrick Xavier (2018)

"Expressing a literary idea musically"

"For every song I wrote on this album, I included a couple of paragraphs about where I wrote it, and usually a photograph associated with the place. I read a lot, all the time, and for this album I was in a hotel outside of Pescara, Italy where they had a little lending library.

"I found a diary by this guy, Patrick Xavier, and strangely enough what he had written echoed what I had been going through. The record became one that compared my experiences with his, with me trying to express that conceptual literary idea musically.

"This is a completely solo bass record; since I didn't have anyone else to play with or anywhere to hide, it required all my skills of composition, and all the different sounds I could wrangle out of the basses I used. To make every song different emotionally, intellectually, and musically, was challenging, and it really inspired me to bring all that I had to the table as a player.

"The tones, compositions and execution on this record are pretty phenomenal, in my opinion. You can put the album on, just as a nice noise in the background, but if you choose to listen a little more carefully, you can appreciate some of the bass techniques too."

GHS
The Light Beyond (2000)

"It could all fall apart at any moment!"

"I did three records with Frank Gambale and Steve Smith: this was the second one we did. It was a really creative time, out in Novato, Northern California, at Steve's house. First thing in the morning, someone would toss out an idea, we'd write a song, and then record it: what we got on tape was the first time we were playing the song. It was done by the seat of our pants, knowing that the whole thing could fall apart at any moment, so the songs are really fresh and exciting. There's a really nice groove and great melody on 'Katahdin' which showcases some of the techniques I used, and which has become a staple of my live shows. Two songs that marked my move toward ambient, post-modern minimalism were 'Nostalgia' and 'Fugitive Aspirations'.

"All three records we did were great. On the first one we were feeling each other out, and obn the third one we were possibly coming to the end of the project, so on *The Light Beyond*, the second one, all the pistons were really firing. Three is the magic number, and actually that applies to the number of takes I do when I'm recording: the first one is okay, the second is good, and I'll try some different things on the third one. Then I get bored!"

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Merry Axemas, Volume 2 (1998)

"I swing my ass off on this record!"

"The *Merry Axemas* record was a collection of guitar heroes doing their versions of Christmas songs, and I wangled myself an invitation on it, for a version of 'Sleigh Ride'. So it's me, Steve Smith on drums and Tom Koster, who wrote 'Europa' for Santana. And, man, I had a bigger budget for that one song than all but one of my solo albums!

"I hired the best studio in San Francisco, and got to pay everyone well, which surely makes everyone play fine and have a good time. It's really well recorded, and I swing my ass off in the music.

"Adrian Belew, who was the producer, also recommended me to a Mexican artist called Caifanes. I played my Fender Urge fretless bass on their song 'Quisiera Ser Alcohol' – it's a wonderful tune and at the time, people had never heard me play fretless before. That song put me on the map and endeared me to the Mexican-American and Español audience.

"Gear-wise, I've got a short scale bass called Larry, in Boston Celtics green, named after the great Larry Bird. My piccolo bass is a fretted Fender. I was using Hartke amps, too, but in the studio, at least 80 or 90 per cent of what you hear is actually a DI signal."

RICHIE KOTZEN
Richie Kotzen (1989)

"Fortunately, Sheehan was unavailable..."

"Richie is a good friend, a wonderful musician and a great singer. We've had some crazy times playing together, and I have much respect for him. This was his first album, recorded during his first time in California at 16 or 17 years old. They were gonna have Billy Sheehan play on it, because he and Steve Smith have done a lot together. Billy was unavailable, which was fortunate for me.

"Richie's a real talent but at that point the producer, Mike Varney, wanted him to play a lot of notes. I was asked to double some runs which were a natural in one octave but then a C# in the next. It was just finger movement. It wasn't really scales as they relate to the chords.

"One time when I was in the studio, Mike and [guitarist] Jason Becker were in the control booth, and I was trying to double some three-octave tapping run that wasn't a scale – it was just moving your fingers in a certain pattern up and down the neck. As I was trying to do this, I heard one of the producers in my headphones saying, 'Hey, Stu, can you play that run a little faster and cleaner? It sounds a little moth-eaten'. And I was like, 'Dude, if I could play this faster and cleaner we would have been done 10 minutes ago!'

THE Lowdown

I WAS THERE!

A historic moment in bass world – recalled by those who were there to see it

In February 2003, Robert Trujillo joins Metallica – and they give him a million bucks to sign up.

Ask our chum Rob Trujillo how he came to join Metallica, the biggest metal band there has ever been or ever will be, and he laughs for good reason. "This is an interesting story!" he says. "We had a two-day audition. The first day was kinda hanging out and reuniting – because I hadn't seen these guys since 1993 or '94, when I was with Suicidal Tendencies – and also getting the vibe of what was going on."

Metallica fans will recall that this was a tricky time for the San Francisco-based thrashers, with a film crew documenting the writing sessions for the then-new album *St Anger*, a therapist called Phil Towle constantly present and asking difficult questions, and singer James Hetfield on the verge of going into rehab to sober up.

"Phil Towle was there and the cameras were all there, so it was really kinda crazy," recalls Trujillo. "I didn't really know how to handle myself or what, so I would just read a book or a magazine. They invited me into the control room and I watched them track, and the next thing you know it's 11 o'clock at night, and Lars [Ulrich, drummer] and I were in the parking lot because we were the last ones to leave.

"Lars says, 'Hey man, let's go get a beer', and I was thinking, this guy could potentially be my boss, so I'd better go and have a cold one with him, and we ended up – and I'm not a big drinker – drinking until five in the morning. This guy's a crazy Viking, right? Man, I had literally the worst hangover of my life, and I had to get up – I slept maybe three hours – and then we went to the studio and I had to play."

© Tim Mosenfelder/Getty

Play he did, impressing the rest of the band with his phenomenal chops and energy. "The footage that you see of me there… I was pretty hammered!" he chuckles. "But you know what, it felt really good. It felt very natural to me. [Later] I got the call that they wanted to meet with me in person, but I was kinda like 'Don't get your hopes up'. I walked into the room and they were all clapping, and they sat me down and Lars threw this figure of money at me, and I was speechless. It almost seemed unreal. I was *not* expecting that…"

Robert Trujillo celebrates his new job in 2003 with (from left) Lars Ulrich, James Hetfield and Kirk Hammett: epic hangover not pictured.

© Kevin Winter/Getty

Low Life

LEARN TO LINE CHECK

Make those crucial pre-show checks count

Maximise your live bass performance with Tax The Heat bassist and BIMM tutor Antonio Angotti.

BIMM INSTITUTE

Welcome to our live performance corner! This time around we're going to delve into the world of line checking. Most gigging scenarios that you will encounter provide the time for you to have an adequate soundcheck, when you make sure that you can easily hear everything you need to be comfortable on stage. It also means that the front-of-house (or FOH) engineer can get a balanced mix of the band before the set starts. However, line checks dispense of those luxuries in favour of quick turnarounds.

So, what is a line check? It's where the FOH engineer ensures that a signal is coming into the mixing console from every mic, DI and input, hence 'checking the lines'. They will then set the gain structure of each line to make sure there is sufficient level to mix with. All other aspects of a typical soundcheck are established during the first few songs of the set, which means that you'll likely have to make do with a lacklustre monitor mix to begin with. You're most likely to encounter line checks when playing festivals, as there often isn't enough time between sets to both set up and run through tracks as a whole band.

If you're used to pre-show soundchecks, it can be quite difficult to get used to having only a line check. I would advise going into these gigs with the expectation that the sound will be less than ideal on stage. Anything better is a bonus. It is therefore crucial that you know your parts and the song structures inside out, so that you can get by during moments that lack sonic clarity.

However, that's not to say that you can't improve your on-stage monitor mix once the set has started. Basic gesturing can often get the job done from across the stage, by pointing to an instrument and signalling up or down to the monitor engineer. Ultimately, it is paramount that you act professionally and always communicate respectfully with the engineer. Remember, you're in full view of the audience during these moments of communication, so any diva behaviour directed at those trying their hardest to get things right will reflect badly on you.

In some circumstances you may never arrive at an ideal onstage mix, so try to prioritise what you need to hear most – and don't forget that there are others on stage also trying to put in their own monitor requests. Apart from that, put on a poker face and concentrate on making the performance great!

The Woodshed

ACOUSTIC BASS EXPLORED

Let's dig beneath the fretboard...

Ace luthier Rob Elrick brings decades of wisdom to the table. Listen up as he delivers the verdict!

In our ongoing deconstruction and exploration of the three primary components of the electric bass guitar – body, neck and fretboard – this month we'll consider the last of these. For many years, I've been surprised by instrument reviews in which the contribution of the fretboard is not simply left unexamined, it is actually dismissed. Your board is not to be overlooked, as it can wield a great influence over the tonal character of your bass.

When discussing the importance of the fretboard, I've always compared it to the soundboard of a piano – not because they function in the same way, but because they are both often overlooked and critical components of their respective instruments. Like the soundboard of a piano, the fretboard affects the transformation of vibration into sound, and while the fretboard does not act as a transducer, amplifying the sound of the strings, it is a critical point of contact for the strings via the fret wire. In the case of fretless basses, it is a direct point of contact for the strings. How could such a wood choice not play an important role in a bass guitar's tone? The fundamental reality is that it does.

Fretboard woods can enhance the different characteristics of a given bass guitar. They can also be chosen to favour certain frequency ranges, as well as to influence the clarity and articulation of an instrument. The three most common fretboard materials for bass guitar – rosewood, maple, and ebony – offer a linear example of a range of performance qualities.

At one end of the spectrum, rosewood generally produces warm, balanced lows. At the other extreme, ebony offers excellent clarity and articulation with more focused mids and sharp, bright highs. Nearer the centre, maple is bright and crisp, with tighter lows and mids than rosewood and less brittle highs than ebony.

The fretboard can be thought of as the tail that wags the dog

Many other fretboard materials fall into various locations throughout that range, including numerous rosewoods and rosewood substitutes, bubinga, different types of maple and ebony, as well as other, less traditional secondary wood choices.

The fretboard can be thought of as the tail that wags the dog – and should never be overlooked, especially when spec-ing a custom instrument. Its influence can contribute as much to the character of a guitar as the body, neck, and type of neck construction.

TRINITY COLLEGE LONDON
aguilar
Overwater BASSES

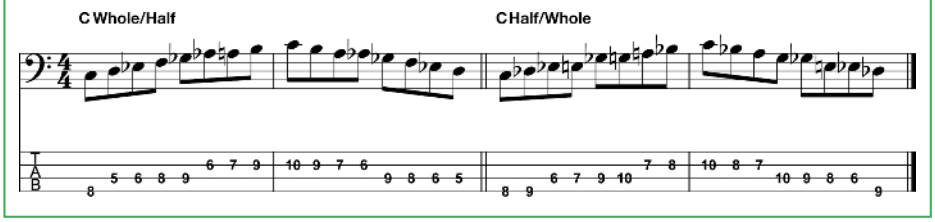
MASTER DIMINISHED HARMONY

Nik Preston takes us through three ways to exploit this useful theory

We've looked at diminished scales and symmetrical harmony in previous issues, but in this month's column we are going to look at two distinct uses of diminished harmony, but in the same context.

You will probably remember the two types of scale: the whole-half diminished, which is more often used over dim7 chords, and the half-whole diminished scale, most often used over dom13b9 chords. Either scale is simply constructed by alternating semi-tones and tones, depending on which you start with, so whole-half is tone, semi-tone and so on, while half-whole is semitone, tone, repeated. Diminished chords are found in a wealth of styles, and form a crucial aspect of Western harmony and should become as familiar to us as most other chords or scales. They have uses beyond the two we have used below, but the two distinct concepts here are very common and worthy of a little attention.

EXERCISE ONE



EXERCISE TWO

EXERCISE THREE

EXERCISE ONE

Exercise 1 is a simple fingering for both C W-H and C H-W over one octave, ascending and descending. As always, remember to take this through all 12 keys and explore other fingerings. To begin with, fingering along one string is a beneficial exercise for fretboard familiarity. As we have seen previously, scales which contain more than seven notes – octatonic, in these examples – don't neatly subscribe to our system of note-naming conventions, so there are some enharmonic options with regards to the spelling of notes, as opposed to the hard and fast rules which we are already familiar with in major and minor harmony.

Diminished chords form a crucial aspect of Western harmony

EXERCISE TWO

Exercise 2 is a line over a progression which we might encounter in a gospel, soul or R&B setting. In the key of C, we simply have a I chord, a IV chord and a #IV dim7 chord. In this type of example, the diminished chord is built on an F# root, and this #IV dim 7 chord contains the same notes as a I (or C) dim 7 chord. We often see diminished chords derived in this manner: you would normally expect to employ the whole-half scale in this context.

EXERCISE THREE

Exercise 3, on the other hand, shows a C13♭9 chord. This is an example of a resolving dominant chord which would most often see a half-whole diminished scale played over it. For context, I've written this example in a similar style to Exercise 3, although the line over the dominant chord is a little more technically challenging. It's perhaps more synonymous with a solo or unison passage, as opposed to a groove per se. We're now in the key of F, with the C chord functioning as chord V.

Inside The Myth

This year marks the centenary of Charles Mingus, the jazz innovator whose prolific musical output was anchored by bass playing of almost mythical eloquence. Although he left us in 1979, his profile continues to rise: we celebrate his life and work with academic and personal perspectives that have rarely, if ever, been expressed before.

Words Dr Nichole Rustin-Paschal **Photography** Getty

The young maestro, pictured in a New York City studio in 1946.

"Charles Mingus, a musical mystic, died in Mexico, January 5, 1979, at the age of 56. He was cremated the next day. That same day 56 sperm whales beached themselves on the Mexican coastline and were removed by fire. These are the coincidences that thrill my imagination. Sue, at his request – carried his ashes to India and finding a place at the source of the Ganges River, where it ran turquoise and glinting with large gold carp, released him, with flowers and prayers at the break of a new day.
Sue and the holy river
Will send you to the saints of jazz –
To Duke and Bird and Fats –
And any other saints you have."

Joni Mitchell, from the liner notes to *Mingus* (1979)

My favourite photo of Charles Mingus is of him sitting at his piano, wearing an animal print, silk-dressing gown. He holds the phone in his left hand, elbow resting on the piano. As he talks, he smiles, and his right hand is slightly blurry, caught mid-motion. Mingus looks here like a movie star, raven haired, mustached and goateed. Lida Moser took the photos in 1965 in Mingus's New York City apartment. In another photo from that shoot, Mingus, still enrobed in his dressing gown, stands bowing his bass. Moser's use of a long exposure visualises the ecstatic feeling Mingus often commented he felt while playing. The blurring of his bowing arm and the over-exposure of light on the side of his face, itself slightly blurred, gives the sense of his being enraptured.

My second favourite photo, perhaps taken by a family member around the same time as the Moser photos, finds him reclining in a black leather chair, barefoot, engrossed in editing a draft of his manuscript for *Beneath The Underdog*. He holds a few pages and pencil in hand. Beside the chair is a barstool piled with the bulk of the manuscript. Mingus began *Beneath The Underdog* in the mid-1960s, around the time the Moser photos were taken.

On the other side of the chair is a bookcase overflowing with albums, books, papers, and other things of life. His bass leans against the bookcase, its broad back facing outward. At the foot of the chair is a chessboard, game in mid-progress. In another photo from this shoot, Mingus sits at the edge of the chair, looking with bemusement at his toddler who smiles directly at the camera.

I love these photos of Mingus relaxed, in good humour, surrounded by family life, music, and writing. Too often, when we seek stories of Mingus's life, we are bombarded with anecdotes about his volatile temper, threatening leadership, and demanding compositions. And yet, as these photos suggest, Mingus also brimmed with humour, tapped into the spiritual elements of music, and enjoyed quiet reflection as well as family life. This side of Mingus is as important to our understanding of his life and music as are the tales of his ferocity on and off stage. Understanding that fullness of his humanity allows us to understand *Beneath The Underdog* as the multifaceted record of that life as he intended it to be.

Often, we are bombarded with anecdotes about Mingus's temper, yet he brimmed with humour and enjoyed quiet reflection and family life

Mingus was among a small number of jazz autobiographers whose approach to writing about the jazz life focused less on the minutiae of life on the road, than they did on exploring the experience of race, gender, and music through complex and often unreliable narration. Louis Armstrong, Mezz Mezzrow, Billie Holiday, Hampton Hawes, Art Pepper, Lena Horne, Dizzy Gillespie, Duke Ellington, Horace Tapscott, and Miles Davis are a few of those whose stories come to mind.

Like these musicians, Mingus pushed boundaries when recounting his experience and his understanding of how being a black man in the U.S., when fighting against segregation and prohibitions on interracial intimacy, demanding the ability to freely exercise civil

Michael Ochs Archive / Getty

Son Arise

We meet blues musician Eric Mingus for a view of his father that counters everything we know about the late icon

Interview: Joel McIver

"My father's methods aren't entirely lost", says Eric Mingus

Dick Darrell / Toronto Star via Getty

What kind of man was your father, Eric?
That's not a simple question, but he was funny, and he enjoyed life like no-one else I've met since. He was interested in things and studied them. He loved poetry. I rarely saw him angry. One of the things I loved about him is that he didn't treat kids as stupid, like some people do – like, 'Oh, you're just a child'. He saw kids as fresh minds that hadn't heard everything – and kids love and connect to his music more than most people. He was my first teacher: he taught me cello, he taught me theory. I was by his side, learning music, and we talked about it constantly. He was constantly writing music and poetry, getting his thoughts out and recording them on tape. He never stopped.

What's your take on the many academic assessments of his music that exist?
Well, let me tell you this – those motherfuckers have got it wrong. The academic approach that all these people have is just their view of it – not the way he viewed it. Look, it's all great, and I'm happy if people can write books about him and teach courses on his music and make a living, but that's not what he wanted. That's not what he was going for. He didn't want to be a classical composer. He didn't want to be all this shit that they're talking about. But you know, no matter what you do, he's still gonna be the Angry Man Of Jazz man that slammed piano lids down on people's fingers – which, by the way, he never fucking did. The unfortunate piano player who gets the credit for that was mortified when she heard that story.

Where do the critics get it wrong?
I look at the reviews of his work as far back as the Fifties, and it's all white men judging his work, and telling him what he should be doing. The whole concept is screwed up. If you were to go back and look at all the shit that was written about black jazz musicians in that time, you'll see they're not treated as human. I have an old book on the early days of jazz that this French guy wrote, and he flat out dismisses Duke Ellington as not being very good, because the writer had learned it all from the white jazz guys that went over to Europe and who misrepresented the music's origins.

Did your father expect his music to live on after him?
To an extent. Once when I was with him, there was a conversation going on with people saying, 'When you die, they'll be playing your music and it will live on forever'. But the way he approached composition was completely spontaneous, and off of him, so if he wasn't there, it can't be played. It's a version of Mingus music, but it's not actually Mingus music. That said, Jack Walrath, the trumpet player with my dad for those last years of my father's career, he was really a student, and he knows some of the methods my father used for conducting a band, so his methods aren't entirely lost.

> **"The editors cut all the important music bits out of *Beneath The Underdog* and shoved in the stories about 26 hookers in one night and so on"**

Charles often commented on the theme of race, in and out of his music.
Yes, but I find it really ironic now that everybody runs around touting Charles Mingus specifically as a black jazz musician and one of the great black denizens, even though when he was alive, some people weren't calling him black because he was mixed race, and when you're mixed, others determine your race according to their

rights, and negotiating the politics of the Cold War. *Beneath The Underdog*, criticised at the time of publication as skirting the line of pornography and saying little, if anything, about "the music", remains a challenging and rewarding document of Mingus's thinking, including that of how he understood jazz as inextricably tied to emotional expressivity, the struggle to be respected as a black man and creative thinker, and the demands of providing for a family and bandmembers. Mingus frames this exploration of his psyche and life as a session with a psychologist. His strategic confessions to the psychologist challenge our conceptions of black male desire, spirituality, sexuality, relationships, and a relentless searching that found expression in his compositions.

Black Saint And The Sinner Lady is one such composition. With liner notes written by Mingus's actual therapist, Edmund Pollock, the album was an antidote, Mingus claimed, to the social ills confronting the country. Pollock agreed, musing that what he heard on the album was a plea "to unite in revolution against any society that restricts freedom and human rights."

Released in 1963, the album also documents Mingus's evolving approach to arranging and composition. He used the piano as "musical score paper" to communicate with the musicians the emotional ideas he wanted them to express. He explained that this was so musicians would "learn the music so it would be in their ears, rather than on paper, so they'd play the compositional parts with as much spontaneity and soul as they'd play a solo." While he was generally pleased with their ability to do so, as he observed in his own notes for the album, he thought Jaki Byard missed the mark on one of the sections, and so he played the passage himself and it was later cut in during post-production. There are few recordings of Mingus playing the piano, but his 1964 album, *Mingus Plays The Piano*, is a standout, showing how skilful he was on the instrument.

Composer Duke Ellington (at the piano) and Charles Mingus during the recording of their album *Money Jungle*, released in 1962

Michael Ochs Archives / Getty

During the 1950s and 1960s, Mingus was expanding his approach to composition. Though he'd been performing and composing since he was a teenager, he began to feel the need, he said, to come out from under the shadow of his idol, Duke Ellington. After a disastrous first time touring with Ellington earlier in his career, Mingus found redemption in *Money Jungle*, which he recorded with Ellington and Max Roach. A flurry of Impulse!, Candid, and Atlantic recordings showed the reach of Mingus's ideas about jazz, politics, and traditional forms of black religious

view of the world. It was a mess, and it still is. Look, he just loved music. If you could play you stayed, and it didn't matter what people's race was. He put the music above everything, even above family, which was a double-edged sword, of course. When you start talking about race and genre in music, it locks you in, and he was rejecting that, saying, 'I should be able to write whatever the fuck I want to write, and go wherever I want to go'. Those are the privileges that a lot of people had that he didn't.

When you're the son of a cultural giant, is it a burden?

It's a gift. It's all good – but sometimes I wonder if I'm living his life for him now that he's gone? It's a constant back and forth. I'm happy to talk to *Bass Player* magazine, of course, because I want people to remember what a great fucking bass player he was.

What is your view of his book, *Beneath The Underdog*?

The original edition states that it is 'His world, as composed by Charles Mingus' meaning that there's a lot of fiction in there – but people read this thing, and they think it's all true. That is mind-blowing to me. Before he died, I was at my father's bedside and he told me, 'I wrote this book, but that's not the book'. He wanted me to straighten it out, because he wrote a book about music and art and his thoughts on those themes, but the editors wanted a salacious book by a black jazz musician. So he, [trombonist] Britt Woodman and his buddies from LA that he grew up with got together one night and made up a bunch of stories. Their thinking was that these stories were so outlandish that there's no way they'll make it into the book. So what did the editors do? They cut all the important music bits and shoved in the stories about 26 hookers in one night and so on. If people want to believe that stuff, that's fine, but that's not the music. My mom [Judith, Mingus's third wife] did a lot of the transcribing of that book, and she told me that there are so many great passages on his thoughts on music that she loved, but which were omitted. If I could find a way, I'd love to publish a musician's edit of that book.

Info on Eric Mingus's music: https://ouchrecords.bandcamp.com

Experimental upright bassist Adi Meyerson offers her take on Mingus

"Charles Mingus evolved along with his music. He played with everyone, and took it all in and created a unique sound and style that he brought into his own music. He was so grounded, and every note he played feels like it's bringing the listener closer to the source.

"He is one of my first influences as a composer, and the way he presented himself as a bandleader and bass player had a great impact on me. His compositional style was revolutionary and different, in the way he featured the bass not only as a melodic instrument but revolved the composition itself around the groove, as well as the melody.

"Mingus always plays the bass and serves the music. I say he plays the bass in the most literal sense, always emphasising the feel and the groove before playing anything fancy. He is rooted and brings you back home.

"As bass players, especially when leading a band, we often feel a certain pressure to stand out, and that can lead to a way of playing that puts the groove and feel in a secondary position and often doesn't serve the music. Mingus always serves the music, while still standing out and leading the band."

"Mingus made space for other musicians, to give them the chance to be heard."

Michael Ochs Archives / Getty

and cultural expression. While he resisted the labelling of his music as jazz, reflecting his belief that black musicians and composers were pigeonholed because of racism, he nevertheless insisted that what he composed was inextricably linked to black culture. As he said, "Jazz is still an ethnic music, fundamentally… jazz is still our music."

Mingus often challenged the racial politics of jazz culture and the music industry, as well as critiquing the absurdity of segregation and segregationists like Governor Orval Faubus. He understood himself as a black man in a white world. He advocated for musicians to be well compensated and recognised for their music. Mingus was a self-described "jazz political activist". Through efforts such as his Debut record label and the Jazz Composers Workshop, Mingus sought ways to take control of his music and to make space for other musicians who deserved the chance to be heard, showing how much jazz is a collective and individual effort.

Mingus was fiercely loyal to his musicians and collaborators, including Dannie Richmond, Eric Dolphy, Bud Powell, Fats Navarro, and Charlie Parker. So much of what he understood about what it means to be an artist, to be a friend, to be a caretaker, he learned growing up in Watts and performing on Central Avenue. He proudly continued playing the "simple West Coast coloured no-name music" of his youth. Lifelong friends like Buddy Collette understood how important it was to Mingus to be in creative community, to have freedom of expression, to belong and be cared for. Mingus cultivated a worldview that

Recording at the Columbia Studio in New York in 1959.

Don Hunstein/Columbia Records/Getty

favoured emotional honesty, an ethic of care and encouragement, and the provision of musical safe spaces, where experimentation, professionalism, discipline, and dreams were nurtured. Though he spent half of his life living in New York, Mingus never abandoned that idealism about what the music represented.

And now we get to celebrate the centenary of this incredibly complex and generous musician and composer, who understood that through his music he would live eternally. He has always invited us into his world, where we have the space to imagine freedom, to contemplate love in all its mystery, to laugh and to cry. As Lida Moser and the unknown family photographer captured the multiplicity of Mingus's personality, let us remember him. Let our children hear his music always.

Dr Rustin-Paschal's book The Kind Of Man I Am: Jazzmasculinity And The World Of Charles Mingus Jr. is published by Wesleyan University Press. Info: nicholerustinpaschal.com

No Longer Lost

A new Mingus record, *The Lost Album From Ronnie Scott's*, promises low-frequency highlights

Music from Charles Mingus has continued to appear in reissued or collected form in the years since his death, but fans will be particularly keen to hear *The Lost Album From Ronnie Scott's*, due out on April 23 for Record Store Day. Recorded at the famous London venue in 1972, the triple LP features almost two and a half hours of music that was never released because Mingus was dropped by his label, Columbia, the following year.

Resonance co-president Zev Feldman, who co-produced the material for release with David Weiss, says, "This is a lost chapter in Mingus's history, originally intended to be an official album release by Mingus that never materialised. Now, we're thrilled to be able to bring this recording to light for the world to hear. It's especially exciting to be celebrating Mingus with this release in his centennial year."

Jazz critic and historian Brian Priestley, who penned a 1983 biography of Mingus, writes, "This magnificent music comes from a special period in the life of Mingus, one in which he re-emerged from the depths of depression and inactivity, to be ultimately greeted with far wider acclaim than he had ever experienced."

The Lost Album includes nine performances captured during the two-night engagement, some a half-hour or more in length. Mingus's sextet on the album included saxophonists Bobby Jones (tenor) and Charles McPherson (alto), pianist John Foster, drummer and saw player Roy Brooks, and trumpeter Jon Faddis, just 19 at the time.

Keeping a watchful eye, circa 1970.

Michael Ochs Archives/Getty

Oedipus Mingus bassist Jon Thorne considers the ethos behind the performance

"Mingus was a powerhouse on the bass, creating a highly individual sound consisting of an astonishingly broad range of emotions. Some of the techniques he developed remain unique to him. His playing put the bass at the forefront of the ensemble and opened up new and exciting possibilities for the instrument as a lead voice in jazz music. Listen to 'Haitian Fight Song', for example. The main bass-line is a classic melodic hook, driving the composition forward and anchoring the ensemble. I played this on every gig with my Oedipus Mingus band in Manchester, and it brought utter joy to me and the audience every time.

"Close study of his playing reveals a bassist who retains his voice while being in constant service to the music that he performed – knowing when to lead and when to support, with either fierce complexity or selfless simplicity. He could be dynamically volcanic or tender, often within the same piece. His time-keeping was brilliant, and he played with courage in the moment and allowed his musicians the same freedoms.

"Mingus said that 'Music is a language of emotions', and his playing explored them all. Crucially, he immersed himself in his bass playing, showing total passion and commitment. His legacy is a timeless well of inspiration."

Mingus in 1976: "He was in constant service to the music that he performed."

Robert Abbott Sengstacke/Getty

Jools Holland's long-time bassist Dave Swift details the master's technique

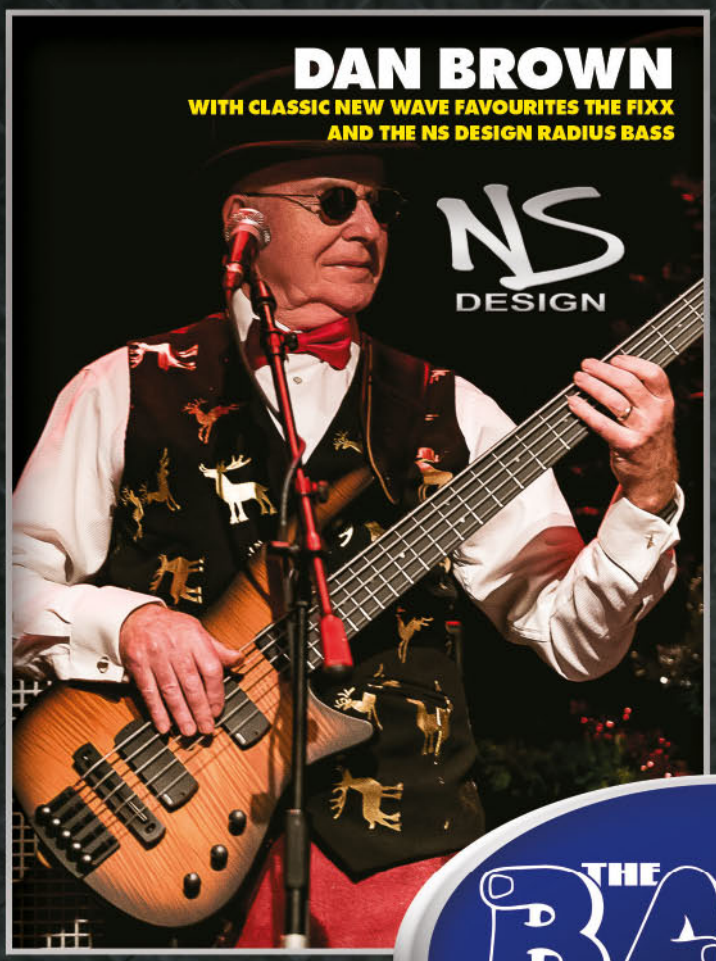
"Charles Mingus played with an incredible and diverse array of artists in his career, including Louis Armstrong, Lionel Hampton, Red Norvo, Charlie Parker and Duke Ellington, and he could and did play appropriately and authentically with these ensembles. At the same time, he was one of the pioneers of modern, experimental jazz techniques, which challenged the instrument's traditional time-keeping function.

"He was a highly proficient and virtuosic bassist and had large, powerful hands, but uniquely Mingus also possessed great speed, agility and dexterity. He plucked predominantly, if not exclusively, with only his right-hand index finger, as James Jamerson would have done on double bass, and indeed did when he switched to bass guitar.

"Mingus was able to play with adroitness, power and momentum and often employed a rapid-fire, one-finger tremolo to sustain a note or as a dramatic effect. He could do this using just his fingernail, like a classical or flamenco guitarist. He was also skilled using a bow, employing techniques such as *spiccato*, where the bow bounces lightly upon the strings, and *col legno*, using the stick of the bow instead of drawing the hair across the strings.

"Most importantly, Mingus was utterly fearless in his playing, and had total command of the instrument's entire range, utilising every inch of the fingerboard and beyond! He often employed double stops, harmonics and slides, and even used both hands on the fingerboard to play contrapuntal lines. He was also one of the earliest double bassists to venture up into the far reaches of thumb position, which he did nonchalantly and effortlessly.

"Mingus has always been a great inspiration to me because he played with such raw passion, conviction, unpredictability and self-assuredness. He produced a huge sound from his bass, which projected his personality, heart and soul."



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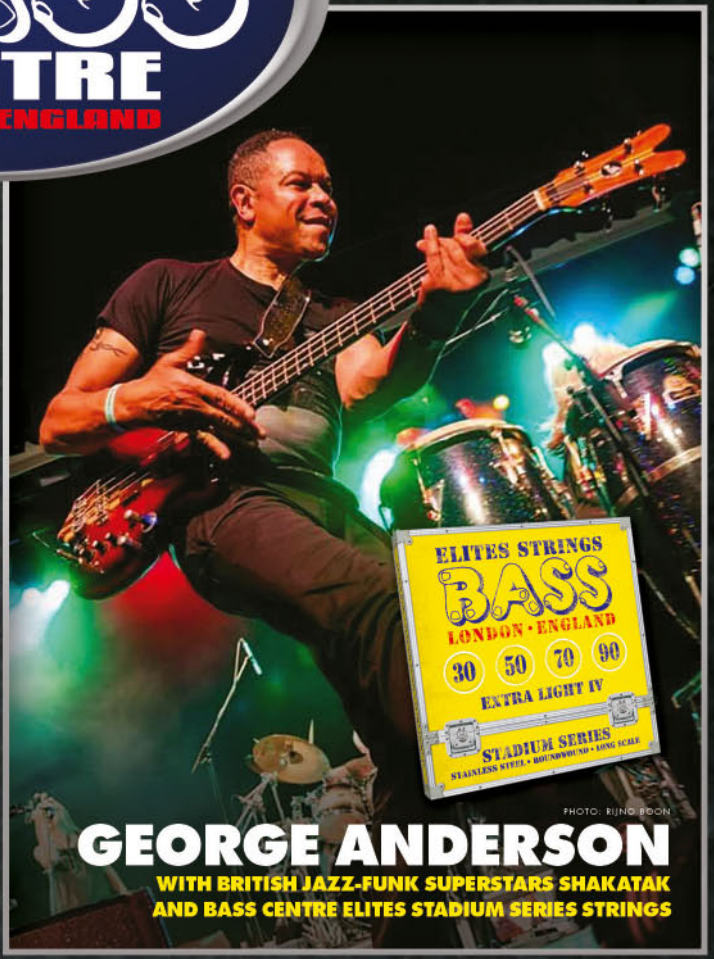

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"Being able to find a good line that you can repeat over and over, and it doesn't get old, is key"

WAR SONGS

Jenny Lee of Warpaint discusses melody versus groove. Which comes first?

Interview: Joel McIver

What's happening, Jenny?
It's a busy time for me. I released a series of seven-inch singles in December and I'm releasing an LP in April. I also have my Singles Club, where we share music and artwork with my community.

What's your current setup?
I mostly play with a Rickenbacker, but I also have a 1978 Fender P-Bass that I play with at times, and I believe I have a late Fifties or early Sixties Kay bass, too. Shoot, what else do I play around with? I've sold some stuff over the years. I had a Fender Mustang, a vintage reissue – it was amazing. I loved the small headstock and the tone was really bright. It was really easy to do chords and fingerpick and it just had a nice, sweet tone.

Is the Rickenbacker your go-to bass?
I do love my P-Bass too – it's got flatwounds on it, so it doesn't really sound good when you do chords because it's just a little too muddy. But the Rick is tried and true. I'll write lines on other basses, and then I'll play them on the Rick, and I'm like, 'Oh, this just sounds so much better'. I think it's because I've toured with it for so long. I've just played the shit out of it.

How did you get into bass?
When I was a kid, I knew I wanted to start playing a musical instrument. I messed around with piano when I was growing up. I really didn't practise enough, but I definitely dabbled with it, because I really wanted to learn how to play a musical instrument. I moved to LA when I was 18 or 19, and drums seemed unrealistic where I was living, and I didn't want to play the guitar, so I was like, 'I'm gonna start playing the bass'. I went to Reno a few months after I had moved to LA, and I told a friend that I wanted to start playing bass. He was like, 'Oh, I have a bass and an amp for you' and he just gave them to me.

That's a pretty cool friend.
He really was – so now there were no obstacles in my way, and I started messing around on bass. I had no clue what I was doing, so I asked some bass players that I knew, who were really good, to give me some lessons. I think I had maybe four or five lessons, and somebody gave me a scale sheet, so I started practising. Actually I got really obsessive about it – practising scales, writing my own bass-lines, playing to drum machines: just playing for hours every day. I really wanted to be good. I had a real drive to do it. It felt like the first thing that had ever actually held my attention for that long.

© Al Pereira/Getty

Who were the bass players that you admired back then?
When I started to play bass, I started to really pay attention to the bass players. Prior to that, I liked to dance to a groove, but I wouldn't necessarily isolate just the bass. After I started playing, I really loved Jah Wobble's style in PIL, which was how I first heard of him. I also loved Bernard Edwards. I'd say those are my two favourite bass players, although obviously there are so many others. I think Flea's playing is incredible. I think Thundercat's playing is amazing. There's so many bass players where I'm like, 'Damn, they're really great'. But those two are so different. I feel like somewhere in the middle of them is where I land – not with the talent, just with the style.

What is good bass playing, as you see it?
I think it's important to consider melodies. A lot of people overlook that when playing bass. Not always, of course. I always say that I feel that bass is a really easy instrument to learn, but it's a really hard instrument to get good at – to really stand out and be great. Oftentimes, it just goes under the radar, doing the root notes and being the support, which is cool, too, because songs sometimes need that. I feel like you can do both. If you're really good, you can always make a bass-line really interesting and make it stick out, even if it's simple. It doesn't mean that you need to get flashy. It's just about the choice of notes, which is why I go back to melody being really important. I also like a repetitive groove, though. That's the thing I loved about Jah Wobble. Being able to find a good line that you can repeat over and over, and it doesn't get old, is key.

Info: www.jennyleelindberg.com

JOSHUA CRUMBLY

EVER AFTER

How old were you when *you* started playing jazz standards? **Joshua Crumbly** has an answer that might surprise you

"Marcus Miller told my dad, "Get your son a bass"."

Bassist, producer and songwriter Joshua Crumbly has just released what might be the bass album of the year, *ForEver* – an atmospheric, unpredictable collection of songs that cover a whole range of territory. This will come as little surprise to anyone familiar with his career as a recording and touring bassist with artists such as Kamasi Washington, Leon Bridges and Terence Blanchard. Crumbly's debut album *Rise* was released in 2020, and together with the new release, adds up to a body of work that has been a long time in the making.

Congratulations on *ForEver*, Joshua. Tell us about the album.
I'll never forget the day I decided to do it. I had actually just finished my first record, and I felt really proud of myself – like, 'Okay, my work is done for a while'. I was in Florida on tour, and this number that I didn't have in my phone called me. I picked up, and it was the bassist Shahzad Ismaily. He said, 'Hey, this is Shahzad – you need to record a solo bass album'. And I'm like, 'Okay!' He graciously opened up his studio, Figure Eight in Brooklyn, to get it started, and then it sat for a little while. When the pandemic happened, I had all this unexpected time to finish it.

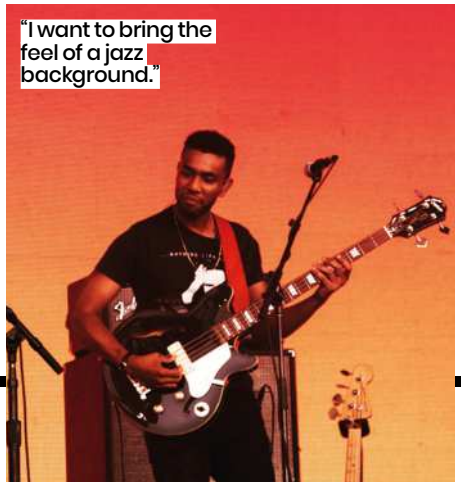
What were your inspirations?
It started as a solo bass project, but then it conceptually branched out with all that was happening in the world, and all the important things that came to the forefront – like family and love and connections. I ended up playing drums and keys on some of it, and if I was hearing a friend's voice strongly, I would call them in on a track here and there.

How much of the music is improvised and how much of it was arranged out beforehand?
A lot of times I'll pick up the bass and play an introductory improvisation, which then turns into a theme. In the past, I would let those moments go and not document them. These days, I think 'Let me put this to tape'. After that, the record started taking shape very naturally. I recorded a lot of the album through a Universal Audio interface into Pro Tools, Logic, or even GarageBand. I used a lot of plugins – delay, chorus and reamping – a bunch of crazy things.

It sounds like there's a bit of looping going on as well.
That's one of the great things about the record – there are no loops. I actually played each track, top to bottom.

Everyone's going to say to you, 'Great loops, Joshua'.
I know – it's gonna be really annoying. I just feel like there's a human element if you don't loop. Even if I'm playing the same thing over and over, there's going to be little subtle differences and imperfections that create more of an emotional experience. I want to bring the feel of me coming from a jazz background and doing it all live, and having that human essence to it.

Tell us about the bass guitars.
There's a lot of Fender Ps on the record, and on the title track I'm using an MTD Kingston, which was my first pro level instrument.


"I want to bring the feel of a jazz background."

That's a special bass that I hadn't played for a long time until that moment.

How did you get into bass? I know you started at a very young age.
I'm an only child. I begged my mom and dad for siblings, but that never happened because I guess I was too much of a handful, so my dad, Ronnie Crumbly, functioned like a big brother as well. He's a saxophone player and when I was young, he had a bunch of his own bands, and was gigging around the Los Angeles area every weekend. He did some touring with Solomon Burke and with a South African gospel artist named Kim Clement. He's the man! So I would follow him to all his gigs. I would sit there with my mom and my colouring book, and for whatever reason, the electric bass always attracted my attention most, out of the whole group. My dad always played with amazing bassists, and one of the first bassists I got to see was this guy we called Uncle Charlie – Charlie Jordan – who slapped a lot. He was heavily influenced by Louis Johnson. As a kid, I was like, 'Oh my God, this is incredible – I want to do that, too.'

Which other bass players were you aware of back then?
Well, my dad ended up getting me some Marcus Miller records – I checked those out

non-stop at home. After that it became a tradition for me to go see Marcus Miller play. I'd go and see him for my birthday, when he would be playing in LA. One time my dad went up to Marcus after one of the shows, and Marcus was like, 'Get your son a bass. You never know what's gonna happen, but if he's showing that much interest, go and get it'.

Sound advice.
Absolutely. Long story short, my dad persuaded me into playing piano first. He was like, 'You know, every great bass player I know is proficient at piano', which was solid advice too, right? So I treated it as a stepping stone to get to the bass, eventually, but I ended up enjoying it. I played classical piano from the age of five to nine – and then at nine, I was like 'All right, I'm ready' and I got an electric bass, a three-quarter size Hondo. I still have it. My second bass was the MTD Kingston, and then I went through lots and lots of Fenders.

What was your first professional gig?
With my dad, actually – pretty much as soon as I started playing bass at 10 years old. I told him, 'I want to be your bass player' and he was like, 'Well, you're gonna have to learn a bunch of standards' and he got me a Real Book. I ended up learning about 30 songs and doing a restaurant gig twice a month with my dad. Sometimes we would switch from jazz to some R&B like Earth, Wind And Fire.

You were playing Real Book material at the age of 10?
Yeah, although I never really thought about it. It was just happening so naturally, and I guess I had a vision, even back then. I never thought about it being out of the ordinary.

So did you go to college?
Yeah, I went to Juilliard, which was a bittersweet experience, because I was touring a bunch at the same time. As soon as I got there, I got a dream call to join Terence Blanchard's quintet. I was out on the road a lot, and that created tension with the artistic director at Juilliard. But you know what, looking back on it, I'm glad I did it. I graduated on time, and I got to study with Ron Carter and learn some classical harmony. So you know what, today I'll say it was a great experience.

Would you say that a degree in music is useful for jazz bass players?
Actually, I'm not sure. The only reason I say that is because I was blessed to get a scholarship, a pretty sizeable one, but it still cost a lot of money. If I was an up-and-coming jazz bassist that wanted to move to New York, I would do my best to get in touch with Ron Carter, and study privately with him. I would also encourage people to reach out to Kendall Briggs, a counterpoint teacher at Juilliard, who also teaches privately. But if money is not an issue, then yeah, I would totally recommend a degree, because you become part of a network of musicians. I still have very close friends from those days that I stay in touch with.

Have you been a musician ever since then?
Yes, I've never had a regular job. I guess I've technically been a professional musician since I was 10 years old. It's funny that you ask this question, because for years, I often wondered what it would be like to have a nine-to-five job. In my own mind, I was finding beauty from looking at other people that have the same kind of regimen every day. During the pandemic, I thought that might be nice instead of just moving around constantly. I even thought about applying for a job at Whole Foods or Trader Joe's.

That probably wouldn't be as much fun as playing with Kamasi Washington.
Yeah! I did a couple years with him. That was an important experience for me, because before that I was really heavily involved in the modern jazz scene in New York. It was all very serious and structured, and played by some brilliant minds, of course – but the thing about Kamasi was that he got me back to just going balls to the wall, like I used to when I was a kid Just going for it and not really thinking too much. That gig led to the band that I'm in now with Leon Bridges. It's weird how your career can be made up for things that you think are completely unrelated. That's not the case – they all lead to the same path.

How are you evolving as a bass player?
That's an interesting question... I think I'm more comfortable with space, and drawing a meaning to it in different ways – just because I'm going through different things as a person now, and I've been on the earth for a longer amount of time. Music gets more and more meaningful as time goes on. I will say there's definitely some similarities to how I used to play. I've always been a very supportive musician, because from day one, I was playing with older musicians, and obviously staying in the pocket was strongly encouraged.

What are your priorities in 2022?
Creating a healthy environment on and off the stage is paramount, you know, and so is making everybody feel special and allowing people to shine. It's really just about having this beautiful communal experience.

ForEver is out now.
Info: www.joshuacrumbly.com

We dig into BP's vaults for a memorable summit in 2008 between us, **Victor Wooten** and **Stanley Clarke**. Could *you* have kept it together at a bass meeting of that calibre? Somehow, we managed it...

Interview: Joel McIver **Photography:** Getty

Your average bass journalist will never be a fiftieth as good as Victor Wooten or Stanley Clarke, but when you're only interviewing one of those players, it's possible to forget that humbling fact for a moment. Faced with both of those world-straddling bassists, however, with their casual mention of double-thumbing here and multi-finger tapping there, and it's an inescapable element of the conversation: these two bassists are so accomplished that the rest of us mortals might as well give up now.

I'm kidding, of course. If anything, both Clarke and Wooten inspire the rest of us to work harder and get better. Both men are immensely encouraging to their fellow bassists, offering practical tips and a dose of philosophy that demonstrates how important it is to rise above the mere metal and wood of our instrument and ascend to the more significant plane of music itself.

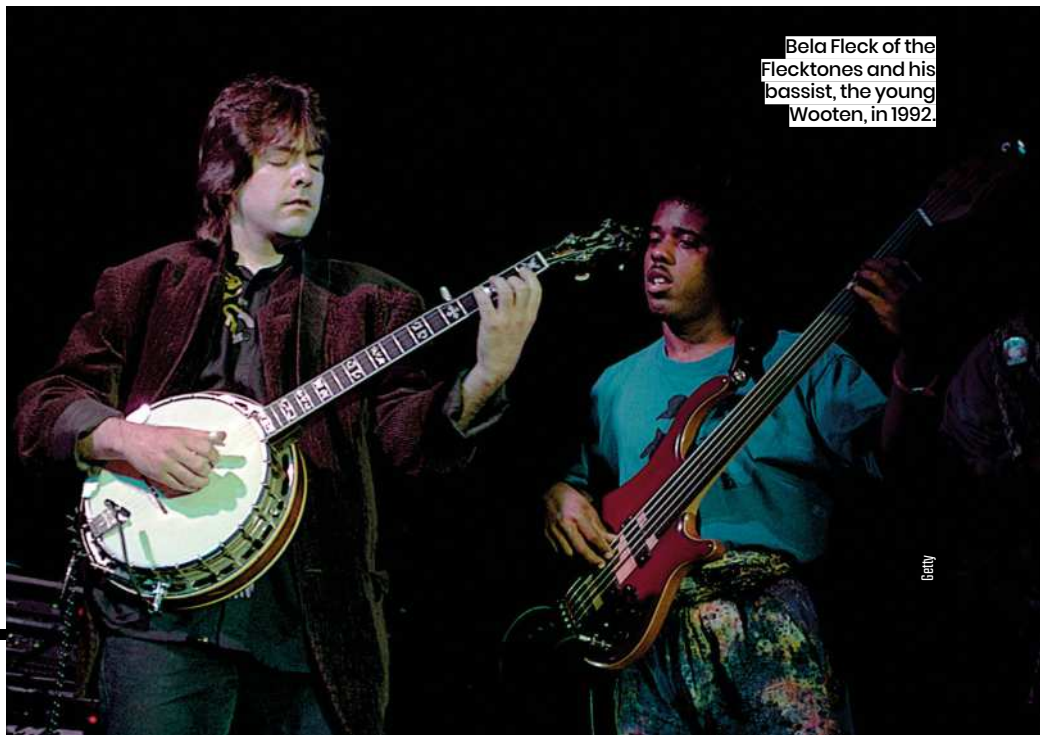
And there's no better time to heed their words than now, with Stanley back on the stage with the legendary fusionists Return To Forever, and Victor releasing his latest album, *Palmystery*. What's more, the pair have teamed up with Marcus Miller for what looks to be the ultimate bass album, released later this year.

Stanley, Return To Forever have just completed a sold-out tour. How did the reunion come about?

Clarke About two years ago, we started talking about the possibility of us getting back together. Some promoters had made attempts to get us back together again, which kind of forced us to at least start talking about it. Me and Chick [Corea, the late keyboard legend] met, and finally we agreed that it would be a good idea to at least try it, so we had talks. Like any band that's been broken up a long time, there were things that people wanted to talk about – certain things that each guy wants. So once we got all that out of the way, the rest was pretty easy. There are lots of promoters out there, and they all want to make money, so getting the gigs was the easiest part – and here we are! I wish we had more time to play gigs, but for the first time around this is what we'll do. If it goes as well as we think it will, you never know – it might happen again next year. One never knows. We'll record a live DVD, but as far as a new album is concerned, I guess that's gonna depend on what happens with this tour.

Did you play the old Return To Forever bass parts in the same way that you used to 30 years ago, or did you give them a modern spin?

Clarke I listened to the music and then played the bass to the songs in the way that I play now. I didn't actually listen to the albums from start to finish, but when we were putting together our recent compilation CD, *Return To Forever: The Anthology*, I realised that there was a lot of music to choose from. There's a lot of notes and a whole lot of parts! Some of it is ridiculously complex. I'm a better musician now, but we were all struggling to remember the parts.



Bela Fleck of the Flecktones and his bassist, the young Wooten, in 1992.

Getty

Meanwhile, Victor, you have a new album out called *Palmystery*, featuring a whole list of guest artists. Was it difficult to sort out the logistics?

Wooten I just had to take my time and get them whenever I could get them! I started recording some of the music many years ago, as far back as 2002, because I was recording this record, which is instrumental jazz, and a funk/R&B record, *Soul Circus*, at the same time – but I didn't know which record I was going to release first. It's mostly Fodera basses on the record. Mostly I use my Yin-Yang Fodera bass: I have two of those and I used both of them. I used a five-string on some parts, just to get a bit lower, and I also used a tenor bass, which is strung ADGC, like the top four strings of a five-string.

You've got Anthony Wellington playing bass on some of the songs. Did you arrange separate bass parts beforehand, or just jam in the studio?

Wooten Yes, Anthony plays on 'Cambo' and 'Flex'. We recorded the parts at the same time because they were newer songs. We collaborate on what needs to happen. When it comes to my band, I have the core of the song ready and then we collaborate on the arrangements, unless somebody has a better idea, in which case they become the songwriters, too.

You also play with a slide on bass on this album, unusually.

Wooten I've seen guitar players do it, so I borrowed a slide and tried it. It takes a little bit of getting comfortable with, because there's a technique there, but it does work fairly well, and the bass having thicker strings actually gives it a pretty good sound.

You're both associated with famous signature basses.

Clarke I'm still using my Alembics, and then I have a company called Spellbinder that makes basses, so I used some of them, and of course I used my acoustic bass. Also, SWR made a new rig for me, that I really liked, especially for this tour. I have a couple of things for different situations. For theatres I have some cabinets with 15" speakers and others with two 10"s. Then, for a larger venue I have some 18"s. I'm covered for whatever I want to do.

Wooten Actually, I haven't actually played that many basses over the years. I had a Univox when I was around six years old, which would have been right around 1970. Then around 1977 I got an Alembic bass, a Series 1. Yes, the Stanley Clarke bass – he was a huge influence.

Arguably the world's most advanced bass player: Mr W.

© Phil Barker/Future Publishing

"I used to hire whole orchestras for scoring action movies. I get off on that" *Stanley Clarke*

Stanley, you're known for playing short-scale basses. What's their attraction for you?

Clarke I have both piccolo and standard Alembic basses. With the Spellbinders, I have a regular, standard-tuned bass and a tenor bass. I wanted a more melodic sound, so I could play chords on the bass. The way I perceive the electric bass is maybe a little bit different to guys who grow up playing regular bass guitar, because I grew up playing acoustic bass for many years, which had very difficult fingering. I looked at the bass guitar kind of like a baby instrument, you know. Steve Swallow was like that as well: he played acoustic bass for many years too. With a lot of the larger bass guitars, when you play chords on them they just get boomy, and I had a lot of things musically that I wanted to do, so it was better for me to get a smaller bass.

Tell us about your Spellbinder basses.

Clarke They're lightweight instruments with a unique brace design that is flexible. The pickups are really nice. The thing about them that I like is that they have some of the qualities of the Alembic, but a little deeper, and on the standard model they actually go higher and lower. It'll give you that Marcus

Miller kind of sound. It's very flexible. The more expensive model is active, and the regular is passive, which sounds good, too.

Why did you start playing Alembics in the first place?
Clarke Just the clarity. Before the Alembic I was playing a Gibson EB-0, and it's a nasty-sounding bass. It looked like a Chet Atkins guitar. Rick Turner from Alembic came to a gig I was playing and said, 'You play really good, but your sound is awful!' I got mad at him, but he said 'I have a bass for you'. I played it and bought it from him that night – I don't know if it was a prototype or what, but I said, 'Man, you're not getting this back'.

Do you play five- and six-string basses too?
Clarke I can, but I don't care for it. I'm so old-school that I don't see the need for it, but I understand... I understand. Ha ha!

You play with a distinctive right-hand position in which your wrist is turned at an almost perpendicular angle to your forearm. Isn't that uncomfortable?
Clarke No. There's a couple of guys, like Victor and Marcus Miller, who always blame me for that when I see them. They saw me doing it, and so they play like that. No, it's not uncomfortable, it's totally normal – and you listen to Victor, and you listen to Marcus, and it's no problem.

What about you, Victor – what's your trademark bass style?
Wooten I'm pretty famous for using a technique called double-thumbing, which is where I use my thumb to do up and downstrokes. In my mind that's not new, because jazz guitar players do it, and also it's similar to using a guitar pick.

The Wes Montgomery approach?
Wooten Exactly! To me it's nothing new – it's a guitar technique. It's not so much about having flashy techniques, it's about feeling better and sounding better to people. Over the years the music gets simpler and less technical – but you end up saying more. It's a natural evolution for people. When our parents get older, they say less, but when they do speak it means a whole lot more. In getting wiser and smarter, you realise other ways of saying things: rather than filling up space, you create more space. Technique doesn't have to be overused or complicated, but you still need good technique to say what you want. You can have all the ideas in the world, but if you don't have the technique to pull them off, you'll be frustrated.

Is it correct that you started playing bass when you were only a toddler?
Wooten I was two or three. All my brothers played, and I'm the youngest. My first real bass was made by Univox: it looked like Paul McCartney's Höfner violin bass. Before that, my brother took two strings off one of his electric guitars and I played that. I had to be competent right away, because the five of us played in a band.

We hear that you two have collaborated on a new album together.
Clarke Me and Marcus and Victor have just about finished a record, a bass album called *SMV*. I think it's gonna come out at the end of this year. It's not what you would expect – it's a great bass album, I think.

How did you divide up the parts?
Clarke We never really looked at it that way, it's not that clinical. A lot of us are playing together at the same time, but it's very orchestrated, I'll put it that way. There's a lot of different instruments.

Jeff Berlin told us recently that it's important to break away from the bass guitar's diatonic symmetry and to study asymmetrical scales. Do you agree?

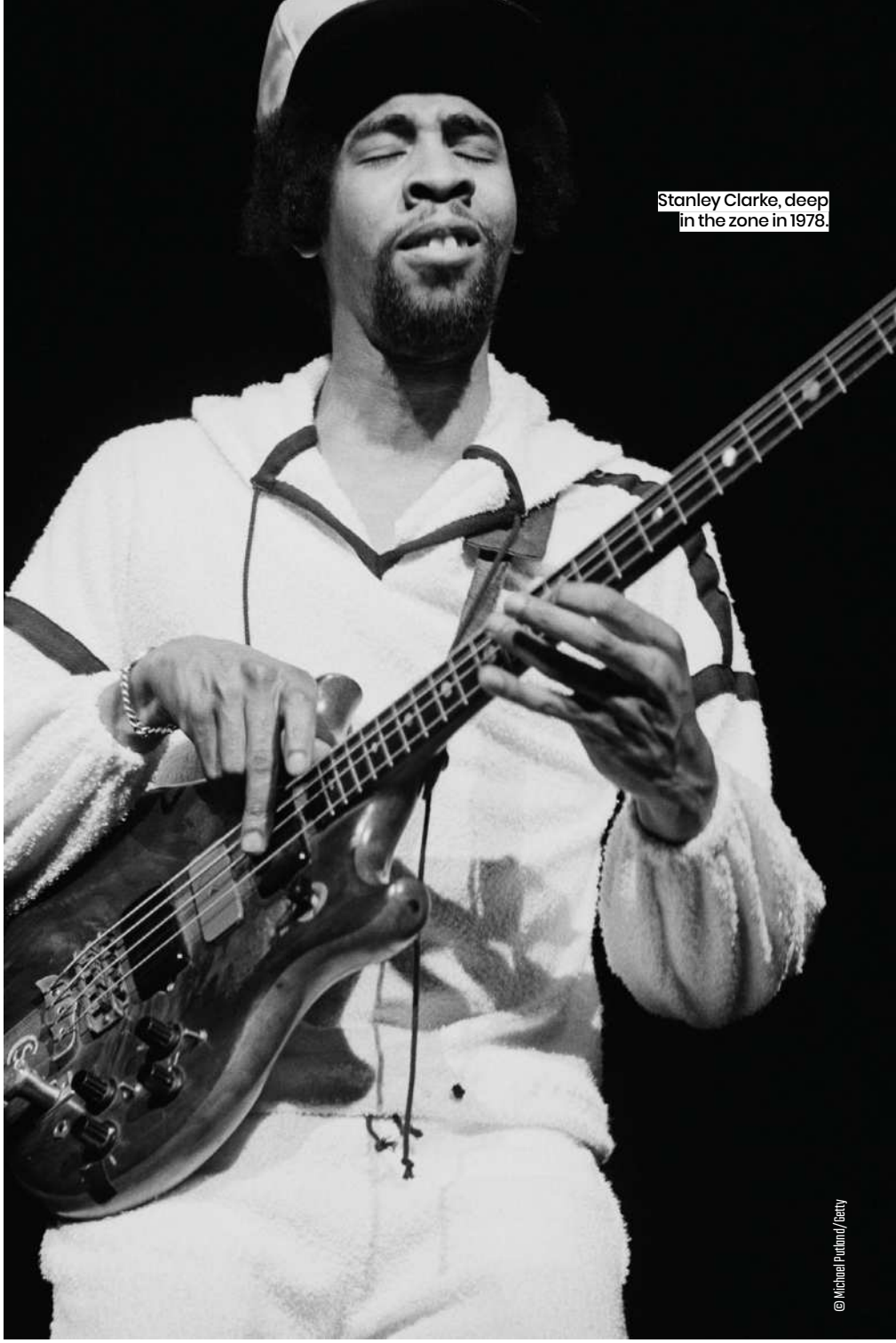
© Skip Bolen/Wirelmage

Wooten I understand that, but I don't agree with it. You're only as limited as your mind is. I think the person who has something to say will figure out another way to do it. Look at Stanley Jordan, for example – he found a way to break out of the limitations of his instrument by playing like a piano. Like Jeff Berlin, I play chords: the bass is no more limited than a guitar. Even a piano has the notes written on it one at a time, it's just that you use all your fingers to play chords. It's not the instrument that makes music, the person makes the music – so if you feel limited, that's okay, that's not a problem, it's just that I don't feel limited.

Stanley, you're also known for the film soundtracks you compose. How do you approach them?
Clarke When I'm writing for films, because I have the information there from the film, and I know what the subject matter that we're dealing with is, it makes the job a little easier. It's about translating emotions into music, so you're writing musical devices. It's a real art, and I really like it. A few years ago, before the budgets came down, I used to hire whole orchestras for action movies: I really get off on that. That's the fun part.

Do you guys still practise?
Clarke Yes, absolutely. There are two parts of practising for me. One is maintenance – you gotta maintain whatever it is that you have. Then there's the idea of expanding and getting better, which is simpler – you just find something you can't play, and try real hard to get it right!
Wooten More than practising, I play. You never practise speaking English, but you're good at it. I practise a little and I play a lot.

Can bass be truly mastered solely through practice, or is there more to it than that?
Wooten The thing is, music is a language, a form of expression. That's how we use it – to express ourselves. It's communication: musicians use it to communicate all the time, and there are universal phrases that everybody knows. Some people can express themselves much better musically, and some things can be expressed much easier – but the thing is, when I was two years old, or when you were two years old, you could speak whatever your first language is very well. You could improvise – no-one had to tell you what to say. You could jam with professionals with no big deal. Music for me was the same, because I was learning it at the same time.
Clarke Remember, the desire to play is natural. I have basses laying around in my house and I just pick them up, it's very


Stanley Clarke, deep in the zone in 1978.
© Michael Putland/Getty

> **"Music is a language, a form of expression. We use it to express ourselves"**
> *Victor Wooten*

therapeutic, particularly the acoustic bass. Then again, lately there's so many things that I do musically, that I sometimes want to have nothing at all to do with music! After this long tour, I'm probably not gonna want to hear anything to do with music…

At some point, is it possible to transcend the instrument's limits and reach bass nirvana?
Wooten That's the goal. Having something to say that people will want to listen to is the most important thing. I never run out of inspiration, because what we talk about is life. Whatever happens, that's what we verbalise. Life doesn't stop, so if you run out of things to talk about, that's your problem. All you gotta do is open your eyes! Music's the same way. Now, a lot of people, when they play, sometimes they just play scales, and you can tell that all they're talking about is music. They're just playing the right scales with the right fingering – but if you take musicians like BB King and Ray Charles, they don't care about scales, they're telling you a story about their life experience. I don't claim to be right, and I'm not saying that other people are wrong – I'm just saying that there are many different approaches.

DREAM ON

There is no more accomplished metal band than Dream Theater. There is no more technically gifted metal bassist than **John Myung**... but does he ever screw up? Let's ask him.

Interview: Ellen O'Reilly **Photography:** Getty

Recently I found myself with headphones on, engrossed in Dream Theater's new album, *A View From The Top Of The World*, and I'm open-mouthed in amazement at the ever-impressive technical ability of their bass behemoth, John Myung. I had the pleasure of interviewing him in person many moons ago, but in today's pandemic world, meeting him this time is all about Zoom.

I prepare myself for the inevitable cringe as I open my laptop. Video calls are not for the faint-hearted, I find. I hear a softly-spoken greeting as 'John M' enters the room. He says, "Hey Ellen! I remember you. Wembley, right?"

We take a moment to reconnect. It's very early on his side of the world, so he's keeping his laptop camera off, but I know it's him because I can hear him noodling away on some recognisable Dream Theater-alike riffs on his signature Ernie Ball Bongo six-string. We get straight into his new album, which – prog-metal fans will be happy to learn – is distinctively Dream Theater, with blistering solos and opus-length tracks. I wonder what the writing process is like for a band of such virtuoso players.

"Each song has a different story to how it started," explains Myung. "Usually someone will have the seed of an idea, and from there it will either flow or not. It's weird: when the right idea comes along it kinda tells everyone what to do, and a song just unfolds naturally. We all put our heads together, and when the song is done it's done."

Okay, so how does he come up with the right bass-line for a particular track? "Well if it's something really complicated I'll record it. When we're writing I have a laptop with Cubase running, which means that I have my own little workstation set up in line with the studio – so if someone has a song part and it's a little bit involved, I can record it. It's usually a fast, complicated unison part on guitar and keyboards that I join in with, so I'll record it, take a break and write it out. For that, I have an iPad with a really cool app called ForScore, which is a great way to take notes. It's really been a godsend.

"Sometimes, though, if I feel a line is too complicated, I'll try to simplify the line and play more groove-oriented notes against what's going on. We might be in the middle of writing something and I'll feel really inspired to play a part, and we're like 'Hey, let's use that'. I like that spur-of-the-moment creativity, where you're in a certain headspace and you play something and it gets a positive reaction from the other musicians. It's a really cool group effort."

"Of course I make mistakes! I just hope that it's not many, and that nobody notices them!"

He reveals that he doesn't use formal notation at these moments: "The notes that I take aren't really written on graph paper and stuff, because I can't really use that. If you saw my notes, it wouldn't make sense. They're just sort of letters, but it makes sense to me. It's enough to tell me what it is I have to play. If I have to see the notes from a distance, it's a lot easier to see block letters rather than dots that are just sitting on staff paper."

Myung has been an avid Ernie Ball player for some years – I wonder if he still has his old Music Man, and the Spector that he used on DT's first two albums. "No, I sold those a long time ago," he says. "It's weird

© Francesco Prandoni/ Getty Images

– I'm not really connected to things I'm not using any more, so over the years I've gotten rid of basses. In the past year I've been trying to figure out what to do with all my prototypes. I'm actually playing a real factory version of the signature Bongo bass that went into production last year, so this would be the one-year anniversary of the launch of that bass."

The Myung signature Bongo six is a black beauty, with an unusual rosewood and roasted maple fretboard. Asked about this feature, he explains: "The two-tone fretboard is a cool way to differentiate the bass. It's based on the Golden Ratio, from the world of geometry. It's a really common ratio, especially in musical instruments. We didn't know if it would work with my bass, but it actually worked out really well because the D string on the bass aligns right over the line where it splits between the two different wood tones. Sonically, it's cool in a real subtle way: the top end has a real brightness that you get from maple, and down low you have the warmer EQ response you get from rosewood. You have this cool EQ going on because of the combined rosewood and maple."

"Sometimes, if I feel a line is too complicated, I'll try to simplify it and play more groove-orientated notes"

And the electronics? "Over the years I've used combinations of humbuckers and single coils, and I found that out of all those combinations, dual humbuckers give you five different, distinct sounds. There's a five-way switch on my bass, where those sounds are pre-programmed depending on the polarity of the pickups. It was a real simple way to take the guesswork out of getting the right sound."

He adds: "What's really important to me as a player is that I need a bass that makes me want to play. It's a psychological thing: the bass has to inspire me. I wake up in the morning and I look forward to playing my bass – it's a personal thing. We're launching a new colour this year, along with a really cool silver."

Myung fans will have noticed our review of his signature overdrive with Ashdown – the Double Drive. Tell us how that came about, John… "It's great for distortion – it has drive one and drive two," he enthuses. "I found that drive one is really good for bass harmonics, and drive two is really cool for giving it that little bit of extra presence without getting in the way. Sometimes distortion pedals sound great when you're playing them, but when you're not they can cause feedback and noise. This one doesn't do that, so I'm excited to check it out and see what it does live."

And there's more, he reveals. "I'm also working on a signature combo with Ashdown. It's something I can bring on tour with me that works really well in terms of having all the outputs and inputs that you need to make it really user-friendly up on stage. It's based on a 15" speaker, because I've found that for my playing style, there's something about that size of speaker that naturally speaks to my playing and EQs things in a way that I really like. That's another cool thing that's in the works."

What's Myung's practice regime, we ask? "Well, right now I'm just stressing out over a two-hour set of material that I have to have on playing form, as we're back out on tour. Some of it is from the new record, and some of it is songs that I haven't played in 10 years or more, so right now I'm busy trying to memorise as many notes as possible. It's cool to focus on something that gets your hands strong and keeps you in shape. That could be anything – it could be as simple as playing scales. What I usually play as a warm-up is not very musical: it's a series of trills, incorporating my fingers in every combination possible and focusing on dexterity. My hands aren't really in shape until we start touring: before that, I'm just trying to memorise everything."

My final question for the maestro is… does he ever make mistakes? "Of course I do! I just hope nobody notices them. Hopefully I don't make too many!"

A View From The Top Of The World is out now on Inside Out. Dream Theater will be touring in North America, the UK and Europe from March.
Info: https://dreamtheater.net/tour

Myung delivering the metal with Jordan Rudess (keyboards) and James LaBrie (vocals).

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FRANKIE POULLAIN, THE DARKNESS

"One of the worst things you can do as a musician is overthink."

DARK HEART

The world's last great hard rock band with an advanced sense of humour, The Darkness, are back with a bass-packed new album, *Motorheart*. Bassist **Frankie Poullain** brings the pick and the thumb...

Seven albums, 22 years, one breakup, three drummers and a reunion into their careers, the British rock band The Darkness have successfully evolved into a rock institution, although they would probably snicker at this term. With a robust sense of self-awareness and never taking their gentle brand of rock stardom too seriously, the quartet – Justin Hawkins (vocals and guitar), his brother Dan (guitar, also producer), Frankie Poullain (bass) and Rufus Tiger Taylor (drums – and son of Queen's Roger Taylor) – are now a part of the music landscape, fortunately for us. Their new album, *Motorheart*, is exceptional for several reasons, among them the range of emotional textures and the artistic videos that accompany the singles, but for our purposes, the razor-sharp playing by Poullain is a primary reason to invest.

Talk to us about the new record, Frankie.
Well, *Motorheart* is a hard rock album, whereas the last one [*Easter Is Cancelled*, 2019] was a bit more thoughtful by our standards, and reflective, and quite emotional really. It was challenging this time in the sense that we weren't in the same room for a lot of it, but at the same time, it was great in that we really valued the times when we were in the same room. At first it was myself, Dan and Rufus, and right towards the end, Justin came in for a few days, which suited him. He's experienced enough and has a strong enough sense of identity, that he could record his vocals in Switzerland. That makes it sound like it's the Eighties and we're a multi-platinum band again, but he happens to have a really nice studio set up there, with views over the Alps. So it seems like necessity is a mother of invention.

You're a committed Gibson Thunderbird player. Any new bass gear this time?
Only in that I switched basses to a more modern-sounding Thunderbird. I used a gold 50th anniversary one, which I thought would only be visually different, but when we plugged it in and tested it at Dan's new studio setup in Sussex, I found that it was actually the best-sounding Thunderbird I've played, which I wasn't expecting. The moral of that story is that sometimes all that glitters *is* gold.

> **"I like to think that bass players will listen to everything on our album – not just bass!"**

Is there a particular song on *Motorheart* that bass players should listen to?
I like to think bass players listen to everything, not just bass, but I do like 'Jussy's Girl'. We toured with Def Leppard, and it has that kind of woozy, warm feeling that you get from Leppard songs. That cosy kind of feeling, that womb-like kind of production that Mutt Lange gave them – you know, that kind of Christmas Day, guilty pleasure kind of sound. Dan really nailed that.

'Welcome Tae Glasgae' starts off with a nifty bass-line.
I wouldn't even call a bass-line. I'd just call it

a bass pattern, because there's only one note. I just started doing it, and Dan immediately said, 'Just keep playing that and don't move!' I felt like he was standing behind me with a pistol.

Did you have to sit in front of a Pro Tools waveform and see how accurate it was, or was it just played by feel?
That's a good question, and it's quite an honest question, so I have to answer it honestly. It was a bit of both, because ultimately, if you get too sucked into the waveforms, you get self-conscious. You have to relax a bit. I do sometimes suffer from red light fever, because I'm a thinker, and one of the worst things you can do as a musician is overthink. It's one of those situations when you just have to remember not to do that. When I first played that part, it was effortless, but of course when you're in the studio, you know that it's got to be perfect, and then it's quite difficult. Also, given that it's probably going to be the first song we play live, I'm probably gonna be walking on stage and playing it, so I need to get it right. So yeah, I did have a few attempts, but actually, there's more than one bass track there. Dan recorded three tracks and mixed them – one dry, one effected with quite a lot of phase on it, and one with bits of overdrive and ring modulator and all that kind of stuff on it.

> "If you get too sucked into the Pro Tools waveforms, you get self-conscious. You have to relax a bit"

Really? It just sounds like a nice fat overdrive to me.
Well, that's the goal, you know. The pick helps give it that tone, too. I actually wish I could play that bass-line with my fingers, but I don't know enough about playing with fingers to do it. I imagine it'd be quite difficult to play that part that way.

If you mess it up, you can always say 'That was my jazz moment'.
Exactly.

What inspired the song?
It's us doing a tongue-in-cheek reference to 'Welcome To The Jungle' by Guns N'Roses. We felt that no-one really talks about Glasgow, even though when you go up there and play at a venue like Barrowland, it's like nowhere else. There's a unique atmosphere. Even if you've arrive there in miserable, existential darkness and torrential rain and it's freezing cold, it feels great. The people compensate for

"I'm married to the Thunderbirds."

Glamour boys: with Dan Hawkins (far left) and Justin Hawkins (centre).

© Roberto Finizio/NurPhoto via Getty

the weather: they make it a lovely, warm-hearted place, and they have a keen sense of anarchy, too.

This album sounds like a real workout for your picking hand: for example, 'Nobody Can See Me Cry' starts with an incredibly fast part.

© Jenny Mog Finn

It's a style that Dan has mastered on the guitar. He can do it effortlessly, that kind of machine-gun picking. On a bass it's tricky, whether or not you match up with the guitars. Sometimes it's better not to match up exactly, and just leave spaces, otherwise it can sound a bit too mechanical.

In 'The Power Of The Glory Of Love', you do some tight palm-muting, like Cliff Williams of AC/DC.
I have to say, that was a big struggle, that song. You know, we used to play a lot more like AC/DC on the first album, although I think part of the charm was the fact that we did it with a kind of reckless, irreverent kind of approach to AC/DC rather than being a faithful kind of thing. But this time, I decided to use my thumb. I find that the pad of the thumb for muting seemed to be the closest thing. Dan was laughing when I was doing it, because it's such an old man thing to do. I looked like I should be wearing a bowtie.

It sounds like you pulled it off pretty effortlessly.
Well, that's very generous of you. What I should really do is switch basses, but I'm so married to the Thunderbirds. I have to say, it's not a good bass for that AC/DC thing. If you're in a pub-rock band and you're doing AC/DC covers, you wouldn't really use a Thunderbird, but I just figured that you don't want to sound exactly like AC/DC, or what's the point?

Have you thought about sticking a bit of sponge under the bridge?
I have, you know, and I should do that. I should really try different basses and whatnot, but I figured it's good to keep the band's identity. If you just do a facsimile of AC/DC, it's gonna sound lifeless.

How do you get that big warm overdrive?
It changes from song to song. In the past, I've used a bit of SansAmp. That can be good. And sometimes it's just the old-fashioned Rat pedal. It's a bit nasty and edgy. Really, it depends on the song, you know. The Big Muff was the one, back in the day. I sometimes feel that if you go too posh with distortion, it gets too precise and nice. It's got to be a bit nasty and a bit wrong.

Live, what do you have in your pedalboard?
I just have four pedals at the moment. I have an old-school flanger that I only use on a couple of songs. I have the Rat that I mentioned, and a modernised Big Muff, but I don't use it that often. I also have this wild kind of ring modulator thing that I only actually use for the bridge of the song 'Easter Is Cancelled', which is probably the most prog thing we've done.

Do you use standard tuning live, or do you go down?
There's a lot of drop-D, but I haven't really gone down to C before.

You'll need a five-string for that. It's only a matter of time.
I know. We often joke about it. Traditionally, we've always been like a Seventies or Eighties kind of band, but on the last couple of albums the Nineties has finally kicked in.

You're touring North America this year. Does the road have the same appeal as it did when you were a lad?
Even more so, especially now. We're just itching to go. The last couple of tours went so well. Ticket sales were up across the board in Europe and the UK, so it just feels great.

> **"I don't look upon this as a career – none of us do. It's basically just fun!"**

What are your long-term goals?
Just to get back on stage, and keep making the good decisions. I don't look upon this as a career, and none of us really do. You know, it's just basically fun. So I see the long term objective is to keep having fun, and to keep making good decisions with a sense of fun, and not being greedy. And not giving into temptation, which is where I think it all went wrong back in the day. Some of that comes with choosing the people you work with, too. I really like how we're growing organically. It's a gradual regrowth and being looked after really well. We have great people working with us. We've stripped everything back and things just function smoothly. We've all become wiser as people and we get on really well – and we have a great laugh together.

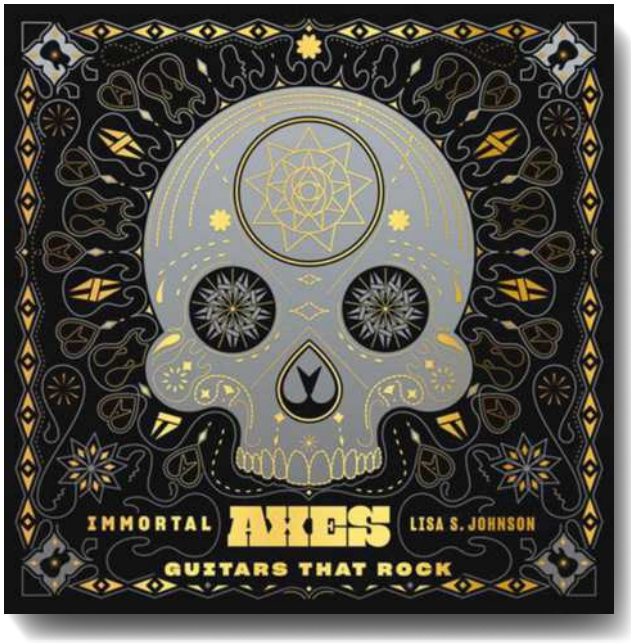
Motorheart is out now.
Info: www.thedarknesslive.com

TURN THE PAGE

A new book, ***Immortal Axes***, features a ton of iconic basses

Photographer Lisa S. Johnson recently released an epic, coffee table-sized book called *Immortal Axes*, a hefty coffee-table artefact that all bass players – and okay, guitarists too – will love. Johnson's previous book, *108 Rock Star Guitars*, saw her cover instruments from Jimmy Page, Keith Richards and other star guitarists in a collection of images that first began when she photographed Les Paul and his famous Gibson at the Iridium Club in New York City. In *Immortal Axes*, she trains her camera lens on more than 100 new instruments belonging to Elvis Presley, Jimi Hendrix, Randy Rhoads and many more, with the basses featured on these pages just some of the famous four-strings in the book.

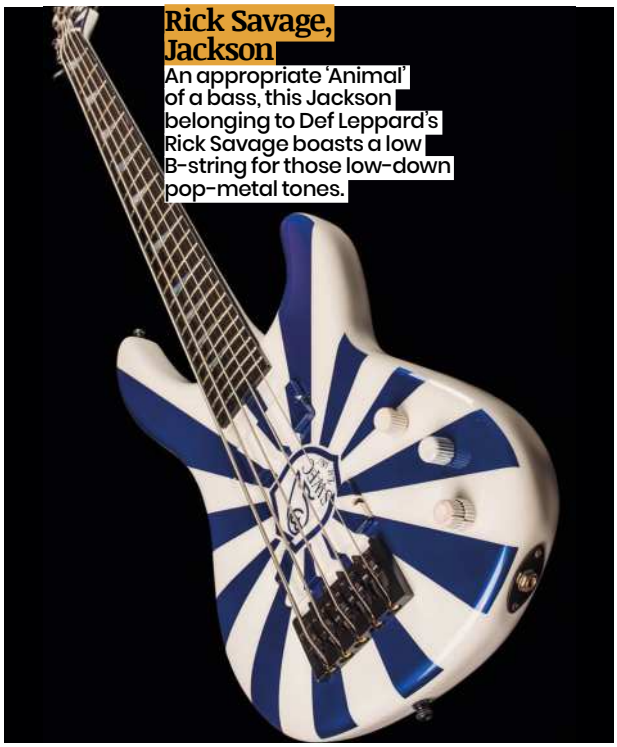
***Immortal Axes** is published by Princeton Architectural Press.*
Info: https://papress.com/pages/immortal-axes



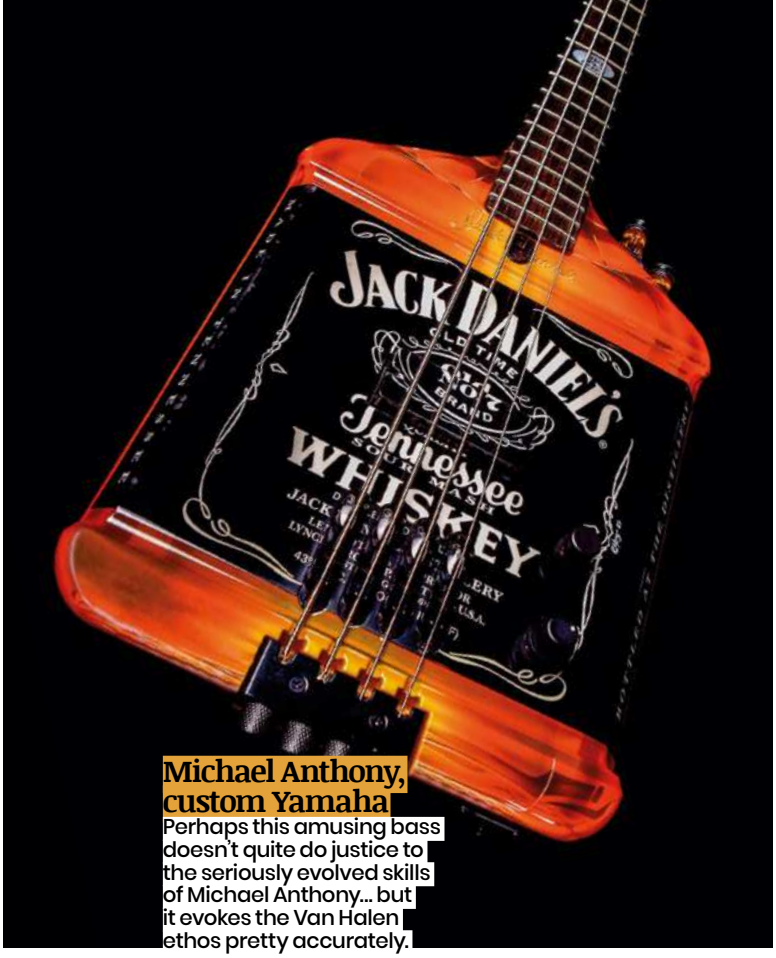
Paul McCartney, 1963 Hofner

The underdog triumphed back in the early Sixties when Paul McCartney, then a kid in a beat band, opted to buy a Hofner because he couldn't afford a Fender...

Immortal Axes



Rick Savage, Jackson
An appropriate 'Animal' of a bass, this Jackson belonging to Def Leppard's Rick Savage boasts a low B-string for those low-down pop-metal tones.



Michael Anthony, custom Yamaha
Perhaps this amusing bass doesn't quite do justice to the seriously evolved skills of Michael Anthony... but it evokes the Van Halen ethos pretty accurately.

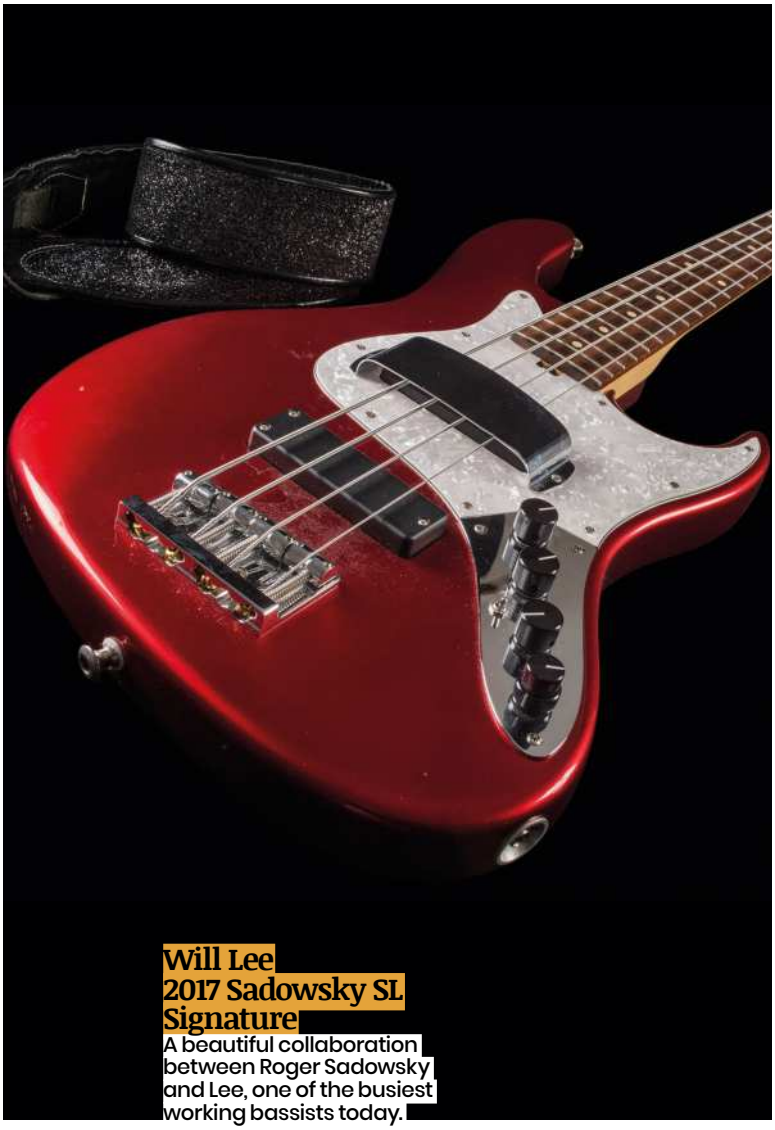
John Entwistle, 1960s Gibson Thunderbird IV
Look at the scratches on that finish! Here's a bass with obvious history. Like the late Ox himself, the battle scars earned from a life on the road are many and visible.

Francis 'Rocco' Prestia, 2017 ESP LTD

The late Tower Of Power bassist Prestia was renowned for his phenomenal fingerpicking and palm-muting: this understated ESP was his late-career bass of choice.

Suzi Quatro, 1964 Fender Precision

We went to Suzi Q's house a few years back and gave this warhorse of a bass a try. It's taken a beating over the years, but still plays like butter.



Will Lee 2017 Sadowsky SL Signature

A beautiful collaboration between Roger Sadowsky and Lee, one of the busiest working bassists today.

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GEAR Reviews

Welcome to our expert road-tests of state-of-the-art bass gear

Behold our world-beating bass gear review section, where we bring you the crop of each month's new, interesting or otherwise relevant bass guitars, bass amplifiers, bass cabs and bass effects. Occasionally we'll review a guitar effect if it's useful for bassists, but generally speaking, this zone is reserved for bass-specific gear.

We take our reviews seriously. *BP* is the last English-language print magazine devoted solely to bass in the world, and we have readers all over the planet, so we're responsible about our conclusions. If a product is worth your time, we'll say so; if it's flawed, we'll make that clear. We're not answerable to advertisers in any way, and our tests are independent of the views of musicians, manufacturers and distributors.

Let us know what you think of our conclusions. Did we get it right?

Joel McIver, Editor

Reviewed this month...

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EURO 4 RST
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£299, www.westsidedistribution.com

SPECTOR
Euro 4 RST

BARNES & MULLINS
www.bandm.co.uk

Tired of back-breaking basses? Try the new Spector Euro out, advises Mike Brooks

The Spector team has been remarkably busy since Korg took over the reins from the company founder Stuart Spector, with new bass models landing regularly over the past few years. This new Euro 4 RST incorporates a three-piece roasted maple neck and utilises some unexpected body timbers. Along with the lightweight hardware, these contribute to an overall weight of just 6.4 pounds – yes, you read that correctly. Want to know more?

Build Quality

Pick up this bass, and you'll find that the familiar NS2 body shape and 3D contouring that has served the design so well for decades remains supremely comfortable. The detail lies very much in the timbers and the construction. Our review model's flame maple top is sumptuous in Sundown Glow, with an organic, woody vibe. Paulownia has been used for the body core: this has similar

£2429

density to swamp ash and, along with the roasted maple neck, contributes considerably to the lightness of the instrument.

The roasted neck possesses a solidly rounded C-shaped profile, in stark contrast to the reduced weight of the body. The neck is a comfortable handful without being hard work for the player, aided by the slim heel. With the bass sitting across the player's knee, there is an obvious headstock bias, but this should be expected with a body of this weight. Played with a strap, the RST takes up a very comfortable playing position. The setup is exemplary, the fretwork is superb and playing across the whole neck is a breeze.

The setup is exemplary, the fretwork is superb and playing across the whole neck is a breeze

The matching headstock facing, mother-of-pearl crown inlays, side dot markers and brass nut combine with the aluminium locking bridge and lightweight machine heads for high-quality function. Aguilar's Super Double humbuckers and OBP-2 electronics make a change from the EMG/Haz preamp/TonePump preamp packages used in the past: it'll be interesting to hear them in action.

Sounds And Playability

Spectors are well known for their array of useable tones, from smooth, rounded warmth to biting top end and an aggressive midrange bark. Here, there's a resonance and sustain that's mightily impressive from the off. There's no lack of fundamental tone, and the reduced weight does not mean that this is a tonally lightweight instrument: there is depth and sparkle in equal measure.

The Aguilar humbuckers are a different tonal platform for a Spector four-string compared to the usual P/J setup: likewise, the voicing of the circuit is a little different to that which fans of the brand will

recognise. With two volume controls, finding the tonal sweet spots requires some experimentation – but once you find them, they will make all the difference. The bass and treble controls offer significant adjustment, with 16- and 18-decibel cut and boost options at your disposal.

Despite being a through-neck instrument, this RST model bubbles along with a skip in its step: note definition across all four strings is clear and resonant, and no matter what your playing style, you'll feel the notes across the front and rear of the bass as you play them. There's no lack of clarity, and both pickups display a useable warmth, with the neck unit being warmer based on its position. The bridge pickup performance is impressive as it offers power, bite and grit.

In the playability stakes, this model is a real winner. This is not only due to the quality of the finishing, the wisely selected hardware and electronics and that oh-so-playable neck, because the weight factor also ensures that the player isn't fighting against this bass. The 19mm string spacing and 42mm nut width merely add to what is already a very comfortable playing experience.

The bridge pickup is impressive, offering power, bite and grit

Conclusion

Having played many Spectors over the years, I can heartily recommend this latest addition to the stable. The price is a little heady for a Euro model, but price increases across the industry in the past year or two have made that inevitable. If you consider the weight and playability benefits, and the concomitant health implications that this bass offers, you may think that it's a price worth paying. If so, I strongly suggest that you audition one of these basses at your earliest opportunity.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Price | £2429
Made In | Czech Republic
Colour | Sundown glow matte, matte satin finish
Body | Paulownia core, flame maple top
Neck | Roasted maple (three-piece), 34" scale, matte satin finish
Neck Join | Through-neck
Fingerboard | Roasted maple, 24 frets
Pickups | Aguilar Super Double 4SD-D1 humbuckers x 2
Electronics | Aguilar OBP-2 (+/- 18dB @ 40 Hz, +/- 16dB @ 6.5 kHz), active, 9-volt
Controls | Volume, volume, bass, treble
Hardware | Chrome; Spector aluminium locking bridge, Gotoh GB-350 machine heads
Weight 6.4 lbs / 2.9 kg
Left-hand available? No
Case/gigbag supplied? Gigbag

WHAT WE THINK

Plus | Great tones, supremely playable, light weight
Minus | Pricey, tones differ from usual Spector sound
Overall | Very enjoyable to play, and a fine addition to the Spector stable

BP RATING

BUILD QUALITY
★★★★★★★★★½
SOUND QUALITY
★★★★★★★★★½
VALUE
★★★★★★★★½★½

SADOWSKY

MetroExpress Hybrid PJ

Fancy a Sadowsky that doesn't break the bank? Stuart Clayton does

HIGH TECH DISTRIBUTION
www.htd-uk.com

£719

Sadowsky is one of the most recognisable names in the bass community. Founded in the late Seventies by Roger Sadowsky, the company initially built a reputation for Fender bass repairs and modifications and began to attract wider attention after they famously installed a Stars Guitars preamp in Marcus Miller's 1977 Jazz bass. Their own range of instruments was launched in the early Eighties, and in the years since, the company has amassed an enviable endorsee list that includes Verdine White of Earth, Wind And Fire, Tal Wilkenfeld, Darryl Jones and Adam Clayton, as well as noted session players such as Will Lee, Hugh McDonald of Bon Jovi and Willie Weeks. Although highly desirable instruments, Sadowsky basses have always occupied the upper end of the market.

In the early 2000s, Roger Sadowsky began a collaboration with Japanese luthier and protégé Yoshi Kikuchi. The result was the MetroLine series of instruments, a range of basses built in Japan to Sadowsky's exacting standards. These popular instruments were more affordable than their US-built cousins and were able to introduce the brand to a significantly wider audience. Overwhelmed with the logistics of handling worldwide distribution of production instruments by himself, Sadowsky entered into a partnership with Warwick in 2018, resulting in the new MetroExpress range. Built in China but with production overseen by Warwick's builders, these instruments are built and marketed under the new Roger Sadowsky Design trademark.

Build Quality

The MetroExpress sports a familiar Jazz bass-style body which is comfortable overall, despite slightly sharper edge contouring than is often found on similarly shaped instruments. The bass is lightweight and comfortable to use in both seated and standing positions. This is largely thanks to the use of okoume – a lightweight African hardwood – for the body. Although this is a seemingly unusual choice, this wood has in fact been used by Sadowsky at its NYC custom shop for several years, reportedly pairing well with all the common fingerboard woods. The fingerboard of this instrument is morado, sometimes known as pau ferro, likely chosen because of the CITES restrictions around the more traditionally used rosewood. Maple is also an option, as is a tigerstripe ebony board for the fretless version.

With the significant headstock mass found here, you might expect a certain amount of neck dive. However, thanks to the use of lightweight open-back Sadowsky tuners and a chunky bridge piece at the other end of the instrument, we're pleased to find that this is very minimal. The neck is smoothly finished and quick to navigate, while the fretwork is excellent across the instrument. Upper fret access is very good up to the 20th fret, with the heel slightly impeding access to only the final, 21st fret. The neck join is a plateless design, with each of the four bolts sitting neatly in recessed ferrules.

Sounds And Playability

The MetroExpress has a P/J pickup configuration with a simple control set comprising Volume, Blend, Treble and Bass pots. I began my tonal experimentation with the Blend control centred, and the boost-only tone controls turned down. The natural tone of the instrument is exemplary: the top end is unobtrusive, while the lower end pairs clarity with grunt in a satisfying manner.

Soloing the split-P pickup offers up a suitably Precision-inspired tone, albeit one with the underlying oomph that comes courtesy of the onboard preamp. Similarly, soloing the bridge pickup yields a punchy midrange that works perfectly for intricate fingerstyle lines. Blending the two obviously provides even more options. The two EQ controls offer significant boosts to the treble and bass frequencies, although these are best used judiciously: a gentle treble boost adds the required bite for slapped or picked lines, while palm-muted grooves are well-served with a gentle bump to the low-end frequencies. As someone more accustomed to a three-band EQ, I was surprised to find myself not missing a midrange control: the bite of the bridge pickup with the added punch from the treble boost fits the bill perfectly.

Conclusion

Sadowsky basses are justifiably revered by the low-end community, with the new MetroExpress range looking certain to bolster that position even further. In partnering with Warwick to produce an affordable range of instruments, Sadowsky now have an impressive offering in all price points. The beginner or first upgrade end of the marketplace is a crowded area, for sure, but with the MetroExpress boasting high levels of build quality paired with a killer sonic palette, they are onto a winner. Highly recommended.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Price | £719
Made In | China
Colour | Vintage white, gloss finish
Body | Okoume
Neck | Maple, 34"
Neck Joint | Bolt-on
Nut | Bone
Fretboard | Morado (maple also available)
Frets | 21, nickel silver
Pickups | Sadowsky P-Style split coil (neck) and Sadowsky J-Style single coil (bridge)
Electronics | Active Sadowsky with two-band EQ
Controls | Volume, Balance, Treble, Bass
Hardware | Sadowsky
Weight | 9.5 lbs / 4.3 kg
Case/gig bag included | Gigbag
Left-hand option available | Yes

WHAT WE THINK

Plus | Broad, versatile tonal range
Minus | Nothing significant
Overall | An impressive – and affordable – bass

BP RATING

BUILD QUALITY

SOUND QUALITY

VALUE

TRACE ELLIOT
ELF C110 Combo

We loved Trace's popular ELF head: can the 1x10 combo match up, asks Mike Brooks?

BARNES & MULLINS
www.bandm.co.uk

£659

From the outset, Trace Elliot's ELF range was not designed to recreate the leviathan bass tones that we all remember from the Eighties and Nineties – that would be impossible. What the range does offer are lightweight solutions to bassists of all levels, with amp heads, lightweight cabinets and now two combos, one of which we have here. The 1x10 ELF may look diminutive – but looks can be deceiving. So how does it perform?

Build Quality

The unit itself is suitably well-dimensioned and lightweight, with the amp housed towards the rear of the combo so that the controls are well out of the way, creating a very tidy package. It comes with a durable dust cover, is ruggedly constructed, and sports a heavy-duty leather handle on the top and a metal grille on the front of the unit. Strangely, there are no corner protectors, although the unit appears capable of handling scuffs and knocks without affecting its appearance too much.

The amp section is simple to operate and clearly laid out, with controls for Gain, a three-band EQ and volume: simplicity is truly the name of the game here. The amp is fitted with a level indicator that indicates compression when it flashes red; on this note, the compressor monitors changes made to the EQ, so take this into account when pushing the EQ controls to their limits. Turning the Gain control to full brings an overdrive/distortion circuit into play, for some colourful, gritty tones.

A quick glance at the rear of the combo shows fan venting, a speaker/headphone selector switch, an additional jack speaker output and a balanced XLR DI output with an earth lift switch. Its only downside as a home practice unit is the lack of an auxiliary input connection in the form of a 3.5mm audio socket or a USB connection, enabling the player to attach an external music source. An additional tweeter might also have improved things for bassists of the tapping persuasion, although that would have pushed the price up.

Sounds

You may be looking at the power ratings and thinking 'How can I use this on a gig? It won't be loud enough'. Allow me to assure you that, having tested the amp with a selection of different basses, it's no shrinking violet in any sense. The combo packs a solid punch, and is capable of projecting solid bottom end, midrange character and biting clarity in the upper frequencies. I accept that it lacks the tonal control we all associate with Trace gear of the past, but then again, bass players' needs have changed over the years.

Testing a couple of five-string basses showed a strong fundamental tone delivery and, although the 10" speaker can only project so much, I found that the tones didn't suffer in a home practice or rehearsal environment. The EQ frequencies have been sensibly selected and will address the needs of bassists who need a strong, robust bass tone that can be adjusted as required in a wide variety of performance settings.

In a live setting, the combo stood up well to a certain point – but inevitably there came a point where the physical limitations of the unit were holding it back. At this point, you should consider an extra cabinet to spread the overall load.

Conclusion

I've heard many of the 'fors' and 'againsts' when it comes to the ELF range – but I think this unit is a fine solution to the perennial requirement of a great-sounding, portable combo that delivers without costing a fortune, or needing two people to carry it. Thankfully, technology has come a long way since the Eighties and, although the Trace company as we once knew it is no more, the brand lives on. The ELF C110 is a powerful, punchy combo and, paired with an extra speaker, could well improve your gigging experience.

Although the Trace Elliot company as we once knew it is no more, the brand lives on

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Price | £659
Made In | China
Power | 130 watts @ 8 ohms, 200 watts @4 ohms (with an additional 8 ohm cabinet)
Features | Gain, level indicator, bass (centre @ 80Hz), middle (centre @ 400Hz), treble (centre @ 4.2kHz), power indicator, volume, speaker/headphone selector switch, ground lift switch)
Speakers | 1x10" Neo 8-ohm driver
Dimensions | 324mm (H) x 305mm (W) x 355mm (D) / 12.75" (H) x 12" (W) x 13.97" (D)
Connections | Input, headphone/line out, speaker output, balanced DI XLR (direct out)
Weight | 18.5 lbs / 8.4 kg

WHAT WE THINK

Plus | Compact, rugged, simple to use
Minus | A little pricey, lacks Aux In connection
Overall | A well-designed combo that's louder than you think

BP RATING

BUILD QUALITY
★★★★★★★★★★
SOUND QUALITY
★★★★★★★★★½
VALUE
★★★★★★★★★½

DUNLOP

Justin Chancellor Cry Baby Wah

The ultimate Tool box? Our Editor readies his boot

WESTSIDE DISTRIBUTION
www.westsidedistribution.com

£299

Readers with keen memories may recall our review of Morley's Cliff Burton Power Wah in 2015, in which we pointed out the advantages of combining fuzz and wah effects in a single heavy-duty pedal. Seven years later, we're reminded of that thoroughly decent tribute to the late Burton with the arrival of this equally solid chunk of pedal: Tool bassist Justin Chancellor's own signature Cry Baby.

Like its earlier competitor, the Chancellor unit packs a lot into a single chassis. In this case, our $300 or £300 of taxed income gets us two wah circuits and a fuzz, the latter of which can work independently or with one of the wah effects. From the toe of the pedal rocker down, we have a footswitch that selects either wah, which are a standard effect and a variant labelled 'UK Filter' – any guesses where that one takes its inspiration? Then there's a Volume and Q control for each wah, allowing you to tweak each effect and run very different sounds at the tap of the footswitch.

Below that is the fuzz section, a highly adjustable effect with Fuzz – essentially, the intensity of the effect – plus Tone and Volume controls. Then there's a side switch marked Fuzz Ind Ctrl, a little red knob that you tap sideways with your foot, allowing the fuzz to operate as a standalone overdrive with no wah involved. When this knob is in Out position, you can use the rocker to add fuzz to your sound, varying from off to full depending on how far you depress it. Finally, there's a small rotary Bypass Delay control, setting the length of time that the wah effect continues after you release the rocker.

Plug in, select a wah sound and step on the rocker, which feels heavy and smooth underfoot. You're immediately rewarded with a range of tone options: the standard Cry Baby sound is indicated by a blue LED and is noticeably brighter, with less low end, than the more aggressive UK filter mode, which lights up with a yellow LED. The latter focuses more on doomy bass tones, and is generally less throaty and mids-heavy than the standard effect.

We really like both sounds, but the standard mode will suit modern, guitar-heavy bands better, thanks to its ability to cut through a little more. You can customise the two effects with the Q controls, which widen or narrow the bandwidth of the wah, and on that note the separate volume controls will be very useful when you're switching between active and passive basses. Crucially, in both modes, the clean and effected bass tones are blended at the very beginning of the rocker sweep, making for a smooth onset of effect.

The Fuzz tone, indicated by a red LED – it's a Christmas tree of a pedal, all right – is neither too shredded nor too smooth, at least to my ears. There's plenty of modulation, fortunately, with Fuzz adding gain, Tone rolling off the brightness as you rotate it clockwise, and Volume allowing you to irritate your neighbours. Combining wah and fuzz obviously leads to some demonic tones if you're not careful, but then again, that's the whole point, as Tool fans will know.

On a practical note, we're very happy with the solidity of the pedal build. The weak spot in these units is always the rocker, understandably so given that it's expected to take the weight of an amply-nourished bassist for years on end, but this one feels pretty much invincible. Dunlop have given this unit a flat bottom with no feet to contend with, making it easier to attach to a pedalboard, and they've also supplied a couple of extra footswitch toppers that increase the target size of the switches. These will come in useful on a dark stage, or indeed if your aim is 'herbally challenged'.

Dunlop, and Chancellor, have pulled off a pretty spectacular trick here. Hats off to them, and test-drive this pedal with our full recommendation.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

RRP | £299
Made In | USA
Features | Filter and wah effects, each with volume and Q controls; fuzz effect with volume and tone controls; selector for independent fuzz use; bypass/delay control
Power | 9v battery or AC adapter (not supplied)
Dimensions | W 5.3" x L 9.6" x H 3.7" / W 135 x L 245 x H 95mm
Weight | 3.1 lbs / 1.4 kg

WHAT WE THINK

Plus | Three useful functions in one
Minus | None
Overall | The best signature bass product in some time

BP RATING

BUILD QUALITY
SOUND QUALITY
VALUE

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Bass Lessons

Making you a better bass player in every issue, our state-of-the-art team of educators will guide you every step of the way. Say hello to them here!

I SPY... 62

RYAN MADORA

Dig into your favourite bass parts... and discover treasure!
Ryan Madora is one of Nashville's most sought-after touring and session bassists. Recent touring and session credits include Robben Ford, Kyshona Armstrong, and her instrumental trio, The Interludes. For the past five years, she has served as musical director for Bobby Bones and has played with Garth Brooks, Darius Rucker, and Carrie Underwood. In addition to instructing at Nashville's campus of Musician's Institute, Ryan has taught at Gerald Veasley's Bass Boot Camp, Rock'n'Roll Fantasy Camp, and at universities across the USA. She has contributed columns to No Treble for over a decade and in 2019, published her first book, *Bass Players To Know: Learning From The Greats*. Ryan offers online education at TrueFire and her website.
www.ryanmadora.com
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BEGINNER 64

STEVE LAWSON

Kickstart your journey to the top of the bass world here
Steve Lawson is the UK's most celebrated solo bass guitarist. Across more than two decades of touring, and a huge catalogue of solo and collaborative albums, he's built up a worldwide audience for his looping and processing approach to bass sound. Recent collaborators include Beardyman, Reeves Gabrels, Andy Gangadeen, Tanya Donelly, Divinity Roxx and Jonas Hellborg. He been teaching bass for almost three decades, and lectures at universities and colleges across the globe. Victor Wooten once commented, 'Steve Lawson is a brilliant musician. I've known about him and listened to him for many years. He may not be one of the most famous bassists – but he is definitely one of the most talented'. Who are we to argue?
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INTERMEDIATE 70

PHILIP MANN

Now you're rolling, it's time to hit the next level
Philip Mann studied at the London College of Music, securing bachelor's and master's degrees in performance before receiving a scholarship to study under Jeff Berlin at the Players School of Music in Florida. Endorsed by Overwater and Eich, he's a busy, internationally freelancing electric and double bassist. His performance and session credits include work with Grammy Award-winning artists Van Morrison and Albert Lee, five-time Grammy Award nominee Hunter Hayes, Deep Purple's Steve Morse, Leo Sayer, Billy Bragg and country artist Peter Donegan. Author of the *Chord Tone Concepts* texts, Philip is currently a member of the visiting faculty at the Players School while simultaneously lecturing for Scott's Bass Lessons.
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ADVANCED 76

RICH BROWN

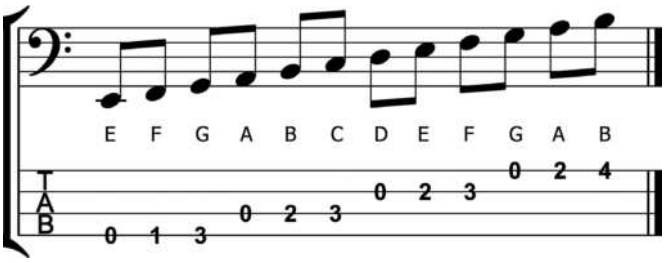
Maximise your bass skills with our advanced studies
Toronto-born electric bassist Rich Brown has established himself as an incredibly versatile artist. Along with being one of the most called-upon electric bass players in Canada, Rich is a composer, producer, bandleader, educator and clinician, broadcaster, and voiceover artist. He has recorded three albums as a leader, including his critically acclaimed album of solo bass compositions *Between Heaviness & Here*. Rich appears on a plethora of recordings, ranging from jazz to traditional Arabic and Asian music. He has performed with a wide variety of artists, including Rudresh Mahanthappa, Vijay Iyer, Steve Coleman and Angelique Kidjo. Rich leads two groups – rinsethealgorithm and The Abeng – and was nominated for a Juno Award in 2016 for his latest album, *Abeng*.
fbass.com/artists/rich-brown
Instagram richbrownbass
Youtube Brown'stone With Rich Brown

BP Notation Legend

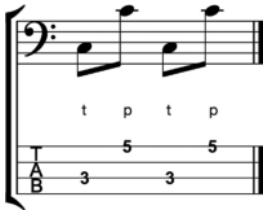
The following is a guide to the notation symbols and terminology used in Bass Player magazine

The Stave: Most music written for the bass guitar uses the bass clef. The example to the right shows the placement of the notes on the stave.

Tablature: This is a graphical representation of the music. Each horizontal line corresponds with a string on the bass guitar, with the lowest line representing the lowest pitched string (E). The numbers represent the frets to be played. Numbers stacked vertically indicate notes that are played together. Where basses with five or six strings are required, the tablature stave will have five or six lines as necessary.

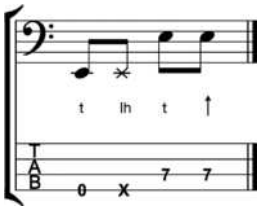


PLAYING TECHNIQUES



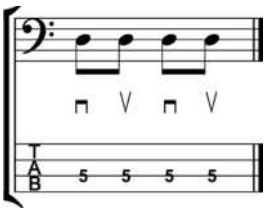
SLAP AND POP TECHNIQUE

Notes slapped with the thumb are marked with a 't', notes popped with the fingers marked with a 'p'.



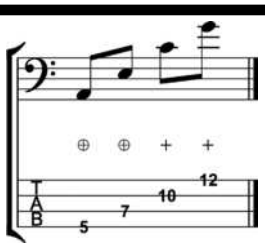
ADVANCED SLAP TECHNIQUE

Fretting hand slaps are marked 'lh' and double thumbing upstrokes are shown with an upward pointing arrow.



PLECTRUM TECHNIQUE

Where necessary, down and upstrokes with the pick will be shown using these symbols (down-up-down-up).



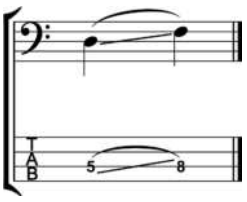
TAPPING TECHNIQUES

Fretting hand taps have a '+' in a circle. Picking hand taps are just '+'. Particular fingers may be shown with numbers.

FRETTING TECHNIQUES

HAMMER-ON AND PULL-OFF

These are shown with a slur over the notes. Only the first note is plucked by the picking hand.



SLIDE (GLISSANDO)

Slides are performed by playing the first note and then sliding the fretting finger up to the second note.

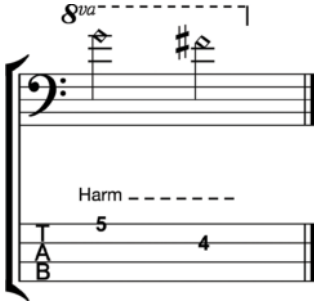
TRILLS

Trills are performed by rapidly alternating between the two notes shown, using hammer-ons and pull-offs.

VIBRATO

The pitch of the note is altered by repeatedly bending the string up and back with the fretting finger.

PLAYING HARMONICS



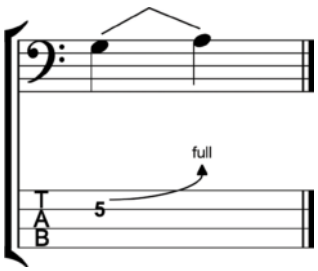
NATURAL HARMONICS

The note is played as a harmonic by lightly touching the string above the fret indicated.

ARTIFICIAL HARMONICS

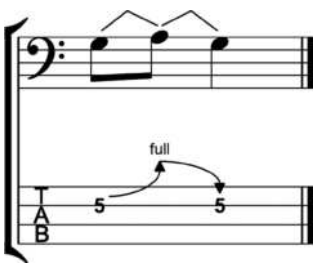
Pluck while fretting the lower note and touching the edge of the picking hand thumb to the note in brackets.

BENDING NOTES



BEND

The note is bent upwards to the interval specified: ½ indicates a semitone, 'full' indicates a tone.



BEND AND RELEASE

The note is bent up to the interval indicated and then released back to its original pitch.

In session and stage bassist Ryan Madora's amazing column, we discover a stack of useful secrets hidden inside our favourite bass-lines

I SPY...

STRAIGHT SIXTEENTHS

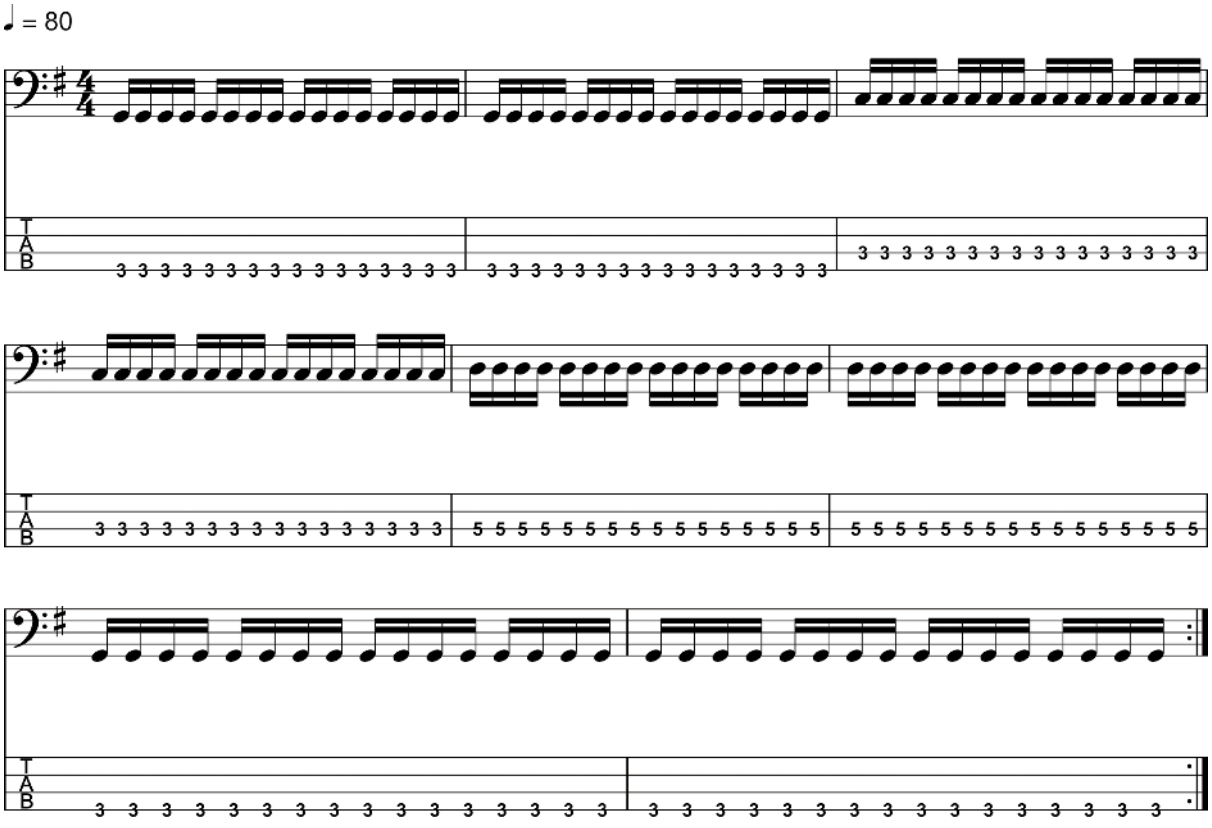
Hey there, bass players! Welcome back to the world of rhythm. After learning about eighth notes and triplet-based rhythms, we've finally reached the all-important subdivision of sixteenth notes. This is where our plucking hand gets a workout and our metronome skills get tested. Used in a wide range of genres, this technique will most likely come in handy if you're playing funk or rock. Why? Well, both genres tend to focus on rhythmic syncopation, technical dexterity, and the sensation of momentum. We'll spy a couple of examples in each genre and highlight our favourite bass players in the process.

Before we do some listening, let's define this rhythm. In a 4/4 bar of music, we would typically have four quarter notes, or one quarter note per beat. When we subdivide each beat into two equal attacks, we end up with eighth notes, spoken 'one-and'. If we subdivide each beat even further, we arrive at sixteenth notes, or four equal attacks per quarter note. This is typically spoken as 'one-e-and-a'. Notice how the first syllable refers to the beat (one, two, three, four), and the third syllable, 'and', is the upbeat, or the eighth note subdivision. In general, sixteenth notes are the smallest subdivision that we're likely to find in most popular music.

While there are a variety of rhythms using sixteenth notes, we're going to keep things simple during this column and stick to grooves that feature straight sixteenths. After all, there are plenty of bass-lines that require this particular skill. Due to the brisk nature of this rhythm, we need to pay close attention to alternating between our index and middle fingers on our plucking hand. If you've been skating by without using both fingers, now would be the perfect time to integrate this technique.

Let's practise this in **Exercise 1**. We'll use our trusty I-IV-V-I chord progression in the key of G. For the first two bars, play sixteenth notes on G, the I chord (3rd fret of the E string). Do the same thing on C, the IV chord (3rd fret of the A string), and D, the V chord (5th fret of the A string). Return to G for two bars to complete the eight-bar chord progression. As you do this, be mindful of the tempo; there's a good chance you'll have to set the metronome fairly low.

EXERCISE ONE



In **Exercise 2**, practise sixteenth notes using the G Major scale. Play the scale ascending, then descending. Stay on each note for two beats, or two sets of sixteenth notes. Try to play as evenly as possible, especially as you move across the strings. Remember to alternate between fingers on your plucking hand. If you find yourself tensing up or cramping, try to breathe and relax. Playing faster doesn't mean we need to use more force; in fact, the less tension in your hand, the easier it will be to play these rhythms.

To kick things up a notch, **Exercise 3** requires us to change notes on every beat. Now in the key of A minor, play sixteenth notes over a specific pattern, A–C–F–E (or i, ♭III, ♭VI, V). Every two bars, we'll shift positions to play the same series of notes but in a slightly different register. Begin at A on the 5th fret of the E string and ascend to each of the notes. In the third bar, change the pattern and grab the A and C higher (on the 7th and 10th frets of the D string). You'll return to the same F and E (played on the 8th and 7th fret of the A string).

In the fifth bar, the pattern shifts again. Using the same A and C, find the F and E on the 10th and 9th fret of the G string. For bars seven and eight, return to the previous pattern as you make your way back to the original position. Not only is this great interval practice, but it requires you to truly synchronise movement between both the fretting and plucking hands.

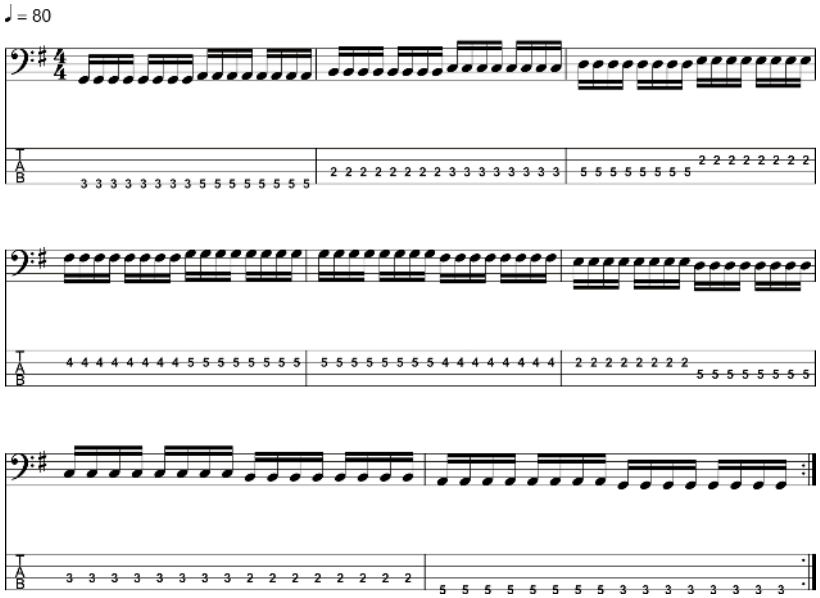
Now that we've practised sixteenth notes, let's do some spying. Perhaps the funkiest example can be found on our favourite Tower Of Power tune, 'What Is Hip?' There's a good chance that the 'hip' they're referring to is Rocco Prestia's groove. Not only does Prestia set the stage with slick sixteenths, but he sneaks in accents, lower octaves, and chromatic motion, all the while sustaining this technically challenging bass-line.

For more funky goodness, check out the bass-centric Vulfpeck tune, 'Dean Town'. This features Joe Dart front and centre, with punchy sixteenth notes throughout the opening theme. Notice how Dart sets the stage on the low F#, then jumps up the octave. He plays through the chord progression with two bars of sixteenth notes per chord before breaking into the next groove. Before attempting to play this, get some practice in with Exercise 1.

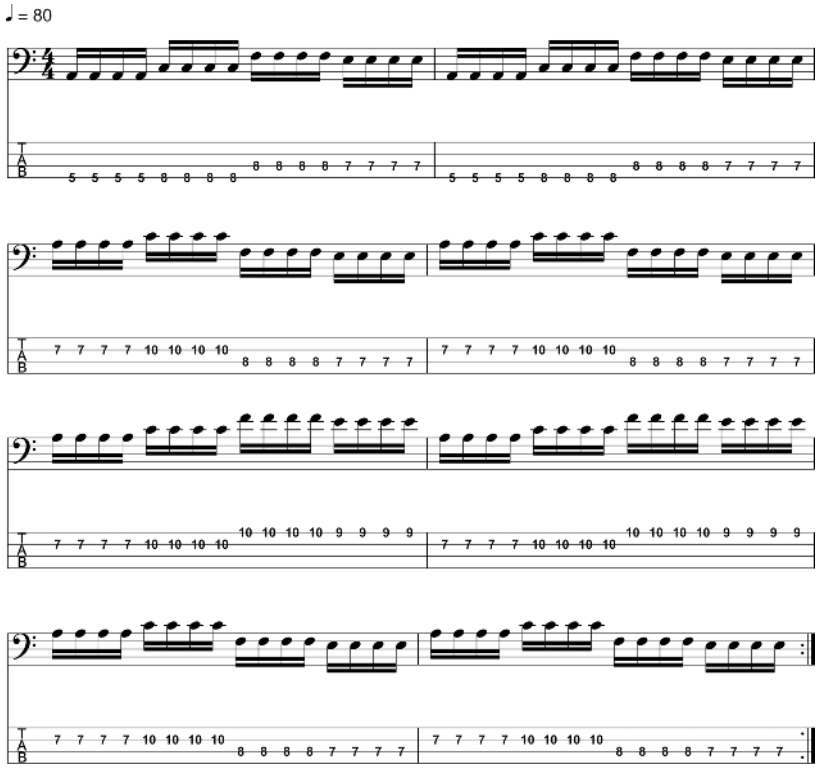
Next up, we'll switch genres and spy sixteenths in the world of rock. First, take a listen to 'Parallel Universe' on the Red Hot Chili Peppers record *Californication*. Momentum is the name of the game as Flea lays down the foundation with brisk sixteenth notes on the root of the chord. They speak loud and clear in the middle register of the instrument and perfectly dictate the chord progression. During the verses, the band stays on each chord for a full bar, resulting in 16 attacks per chord. At the bridge, the changes occur quite quickly, forcing the movement on every beat (or four attacks per note). This is similar to what we practised in Exercise 3.

Finally, listen to 'Whiplash' by Metallica. To set up the verse, Cliff Burton busts out quick sixteenth notes to match the rhythm guitars. Lucky for us, they add accents every other bar using our recent acquaintance, the quarter note triplet. See you next month!

EXERCISE TWO



EXERCISE THREE



The great Steve Lawson brings us a new approach to studying bass at beginner level. The journey begins...

SOUL STUDIES

THREE-NOTE SOUL LINES

Let's continue our investigation of the three-note soul bass-line ideas that we were looking at last month. This time, we'll move those patterns through the key, so we can use them over chord progressions, and explore how we can add a single chromatic passing note to each one to increase the number of options in our lines.

To begin with, let's refresh our memories of the two lines we were looking at. The Major chord pattern used the root, fifth and major sixth of the chord. This is a shape used on a load of famous soul bass-lines, including 'Rescue Me' by Fontella Bass and 'I Can't Turn You Loose' by Otis Redding. The minor version uses the root, fifth and minor seventh, only a semitone away from the Major pattern. We just raise the Major sixth by a semitone to become the minor seventh, and our new pattern is formed.

These exercises may feel like they are going to slow you down, but ultimately they will make your learning journey much smoother

EXERCISE ONE

Exercise 1 is what these lines look like when notated, with the root note the highest note of the three. It's always worth keeping in mind that the root doesn't have to be the lowest note, especially when our progression has B, C, D or E♭ chords in it. All those chords give us a lot of 'fingerboard real estate' to explore which is below the root note in pitch.

Pay attention at this point to the finger with which you start each pattern. Consistent fingering is one of the easiest and quickest ways to develop fluency and muscle memory. If you re-learn the fingering for a phrase every time you play it, you'll never be able to commit the pattern to your subconscious memory and recall it. Making sure that you start the Major pattern on your index finger, and then the minor pattern on your pinky finger, will help you to keep those patterns the same in each position as we move it up the neck. Focusing on fingering like this may feel like it's going to slow you down, but ultimately it makes your learning journey much smoother and more consistent. Take the time now to go over those two patterns, using exactly the same fingering every time.

Let's take those patterns and move them through the key of C, adjusting for the sequence of Major and minor chords we get in the key. Remember our diatonic (in one key) chord order? In C Major the chords are C Major, D minor, E minor, F Major, G Major, A minor and B minor(♭5), which is often written as B diminished.

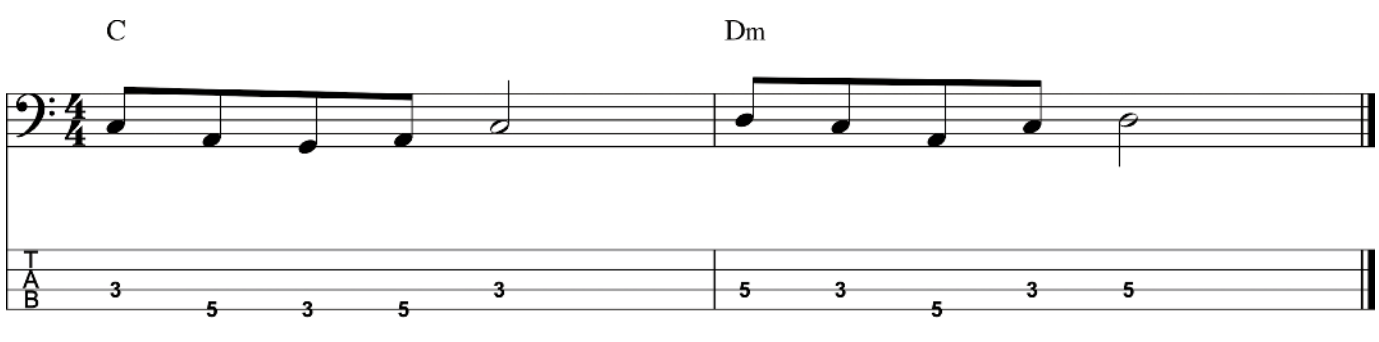
EXERCISE TWO

Exercise 2 presents our three-note soul patterns, in order, in the key of C. Take it slow and think about which finger you need to start each pattern on. It's also worth thinking about which ones can be grouped together in pairs, in terms of where on the neck you play them. For example, the C Major and the D minor only require two frets, the 3rd and 5th. Looking at the TAB under Exercise 2, we can see that the G Major and A minor pair also share the same two fret pattern, this time the 10th and 12th.

Grouping patterns together is an essential part of any learning, not just music. We recognise patterns when learning language, or reading a map, or remembering instructions for any manual skill. In academic work, we're always looking for consistent patterns and connections across different theories and approaches to the topic at hand. Music is no different, and thankfully, on the bass neck, we have a consistent relationship between all the strings so that patterns are not only manifest in terms of intervals between pitches, but are consistently formed on the fingerboard too, making our job that much easier.

Let's apply this to a few useful chord progressions. I'll give you a pattern for the first one, and then make some suggestions for chord progressions to try out here.

EXERCISE ONE



Yes, you've seen this picture of Carol Kaye before. It's still very evocative.

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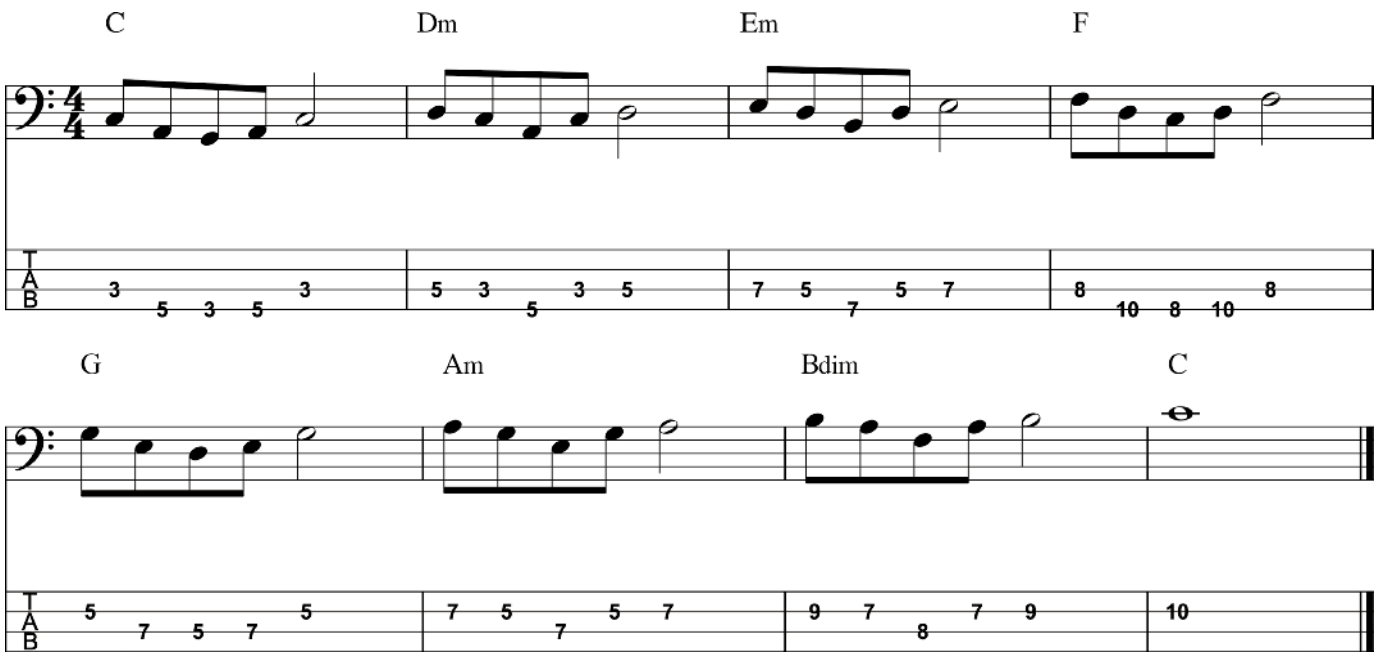
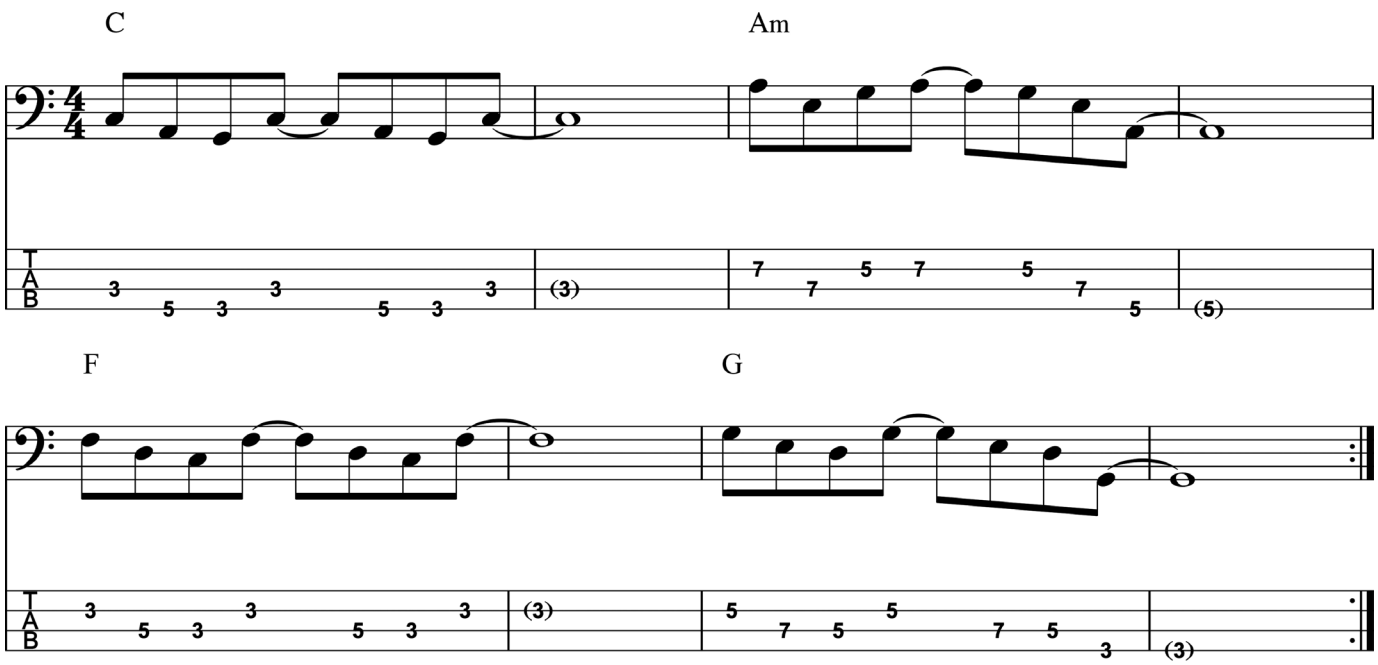
EXERCISE TWO



Meters ahead of the competition: the mighty George Porter Jr.

© Tim Mosenfelder/WireImage

EXERCISE THREE



EXERCISE THREE

Exercise 3 is a classic I, vi, IV, V progression – 'one, six, four, five' – using the first, sixth, fourth and fifth chords in the key in sequence. I've written the line to incorporate going both ways on the lower notes, but also to end the A minor and G Major chords on the lower octave. This shows how we can vary our playing based on the notes we have available to us in a given hand position and area of the neck.

As usual, there's no tempo marking, because you need to start very slowly to get comfortable with those shifts, and to make sure that the fingering you're using is the most efficient one for the position shifts that you're making.

There are two things to notice here: the C and F patterns are identical, just one string apart. Those kinds of connections are so useful to recognise when learning music. You only need to remember a single instruction to double the amount of information that's in your head. That instruction is 'Play one string over' – nothing else changes. Always look out for patterns that work like that within songs.

The other thing to notice is that there's a position shift required in order to hit that low G at the end of the G major chord. If that feels too difficult at this stage, feel free to play the high G, the same one that the chord starts on, but the low one shows us one of the many options available to us when writing or improvising lines in this style.

The rhythm has a couple of tricky elements: the tied notes in every bar might feel hard to read, but as always, if you can copy the notation into notation software such as Musescore or find a friend to play it for you, you'll be able to hear what it sounds like. Learning to read these patterns is an additional benefit to working through this material, but it's most important right now that we get familiar with the actual sounds and patterns.

Another chord progression you might like to try is C Major > E minor > F Major > F Major. The two bars of F Major give you a chance to try a couple of different patterns and see whether repetition or variation give you the effect you're looking for. Also try A minor > F Major > C Major > G Major. This is a very common progression in modern pop songs, so we're creating a blend of soul and contemporary pop styles here.

Try these same sequences in other keys. Work out what number the chord is in the key, whether it's the 'one' chord or the 'five' chord and so on, and then move that to a different start note. This is called transposing, and is a skill that comes in handy if you're in a covers band which is trying to find the most comfortable key in a song for your singer. Singers' ranges vary dramatically, and often the comfortable key for one person is a long way away from the original.

Have a listen to 'Islands In The Stream' by Dolly Parton and Kenny Rogers, and pay attention to the key changes between the verses. Those didn't happen in the Bee Gees original, but were added to the Parton and Rogers version to make sure that both singers got to sing the song in a comfortable range.

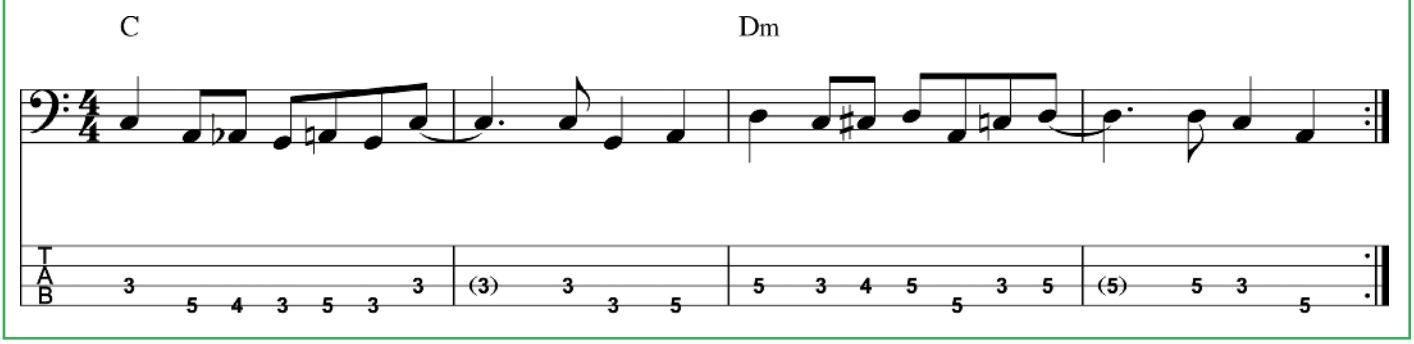
Being able to transpose chord progressions to new keys is a vital skill that will serve you well in many situations

Being able to transpose chord progressions to new keys is a vital skill that will serve you well in many situations.

EXERCISE FOUR

We're going to finish up today by adding an extra note to our three-note patterns. Instead of adding a chord note, which would impact the harmony, we're going to add a chromatic note between the two closest notes in each sequence. In the Major pattern this is between the fifth and the sixth, and in the minor pattern it's between the seventh and the root. This gives us a whole different set of possible rhythmic phrases for our line, as well as a hint of jazz creeping in, given that our ears often hear chromaticism as associated with that style.

EXERCISE FOUR



It's worth being aware of how much attention the extra note, which comes from outside the key, draws to itself depending on how fast the line is. If we sit on that note for too long, it will sound 'out', which is not necessarily a bad thing, but means that it will be heard as an alteration to the harmony rather than as a passing note. Experiment with different tempos as you get comfortable with the shapes and see what works for you.

Exercise 4 gives us one variation that will work for our C Major to D minor shift, and you can then take the idea and try it on the other chord progressions we've looked at in the key of C. As before, then try moving it to other keys.

The confusing bit here in the written music is the presence of accidentals, or notes with additional information next to them about being sharp, flat or natural. One of the things which this highlights is that the complexity of reading a particular piece of music is not necessarily reflected in the difficulty of playing it. This isn't a particularly tricky line, but because notation is designed to group things comfortably inside keys, chromatic notes make it look a lot more complex.

Try different tempos as you get comfortable with the lines

What you'll find over time is that you start to recognise patterns within written music regarding how accidentals occur and what that pattern means. It will pull you away from having to awkwardly work out what every single note is, and instead enable you to recognise the written shapes for chromatic runs with the same familiarity as we can develop around recognising arpeggios or scale runs when written down. Copying this into notation software will help you make sense of what's going on.

Have fun, and we'll be back next month with more soulful low-end action!

Donald 'Duck' Dunn of Booker T & The MGs: a hero in our world.

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Phil Mann is a stage and session star and educator extraordinaire. Get ready to step up your bass game!

NEXT STEPS

TRANSCEND CHORDS SMOOTHLY

Welcome to your next step! Today, I'd like to start by posing a question. 'Technique' is a word that's often thrown around in the world of bass academia. I'd like to ask you whether you've ever stopped to consider what it actually means, or more importantly, how it's associated with progress? To me, technique is a word suggestive of a physical act centred around the execution of a skill set.

A refined technique can obviously help enhance a whole variety of subsequent factors, ranging from how you interact with your instrument, to the articulation and dynamics associated to the delivery of a note. However, it doesn't really address one major component – the actual choice of note itself. You could have the most prolific technique on the planet, but that doesn't mean what you're playing is actually suitable.

Harmony can only transcend two chord structures at any given time. Consider a chord progression such as II–V–I. The movements involved are simply II–V and V–I. Recognising this is essential, and it's why our recent studies have been focused on chords in pairs, refining the notes you employ s we progress. Don't be fooled into thinking technique is music – technique merely allows you to convey music more efficiently.

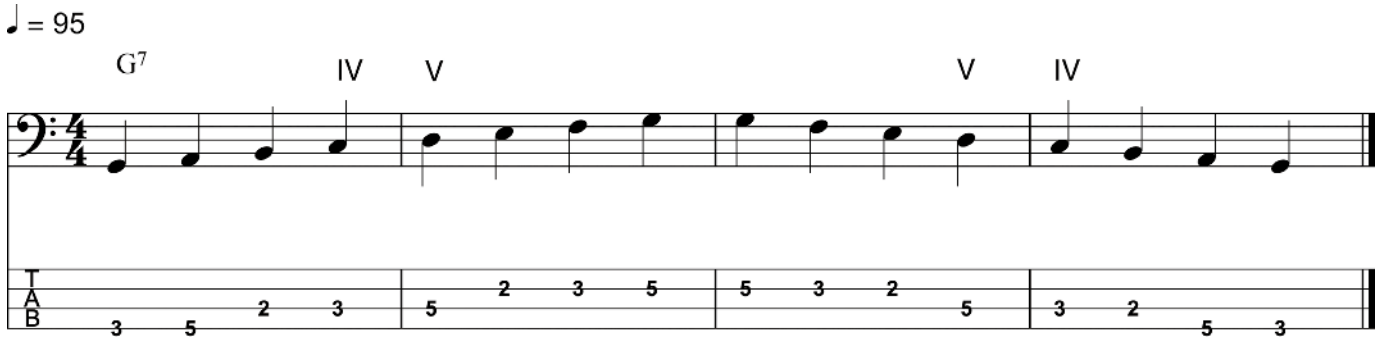
© Jo Hale/Redferns

Eagles Of Death Metal bassist Jenny Vee, flying high

Don't be fooled into thinking technique is music – technique merely allows you to convey music more efficiently

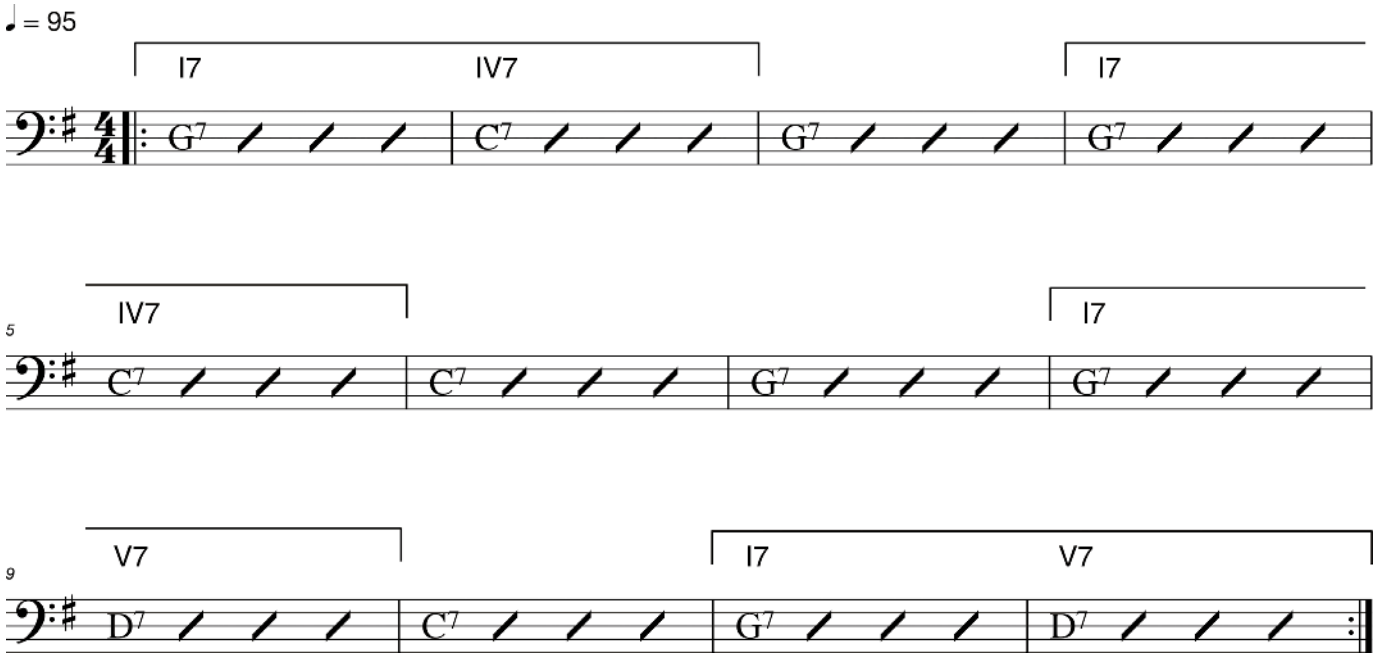
This month's studies begin with an investigation of the melodic content within a V7–IV7 movement – a sequence of chords commonly associated with bars nine and 10 of a 12-bar progression. For quick reference, let's allocate them titles: the chord on the V7 is the 'dominant', and the one on the IV7 is the 'subdominant'. Good luck!

EXERCISE ONE



The root note and position of the dominant and subdominant chords have been identified in this month's first exercise. Ascend, then descend, through this example of the Mixolydian mode, ensuring that you know where both the fourth and fifth degrees are.

EXERCISE TWO



This exercise depicts a rudimentary I7-IV7-V7 chord progression. If you examine these 12 measures, you'll see that the entire sequence is made up of only three harmonic relationships – the I7-IV7, the I7-V7 and the V7-IV7. To date, our focus has been primarily on exploring the first two of these pairings. Today we'll look at the third and final relationship.

Michael Schenker Group bassist Barend Courbois

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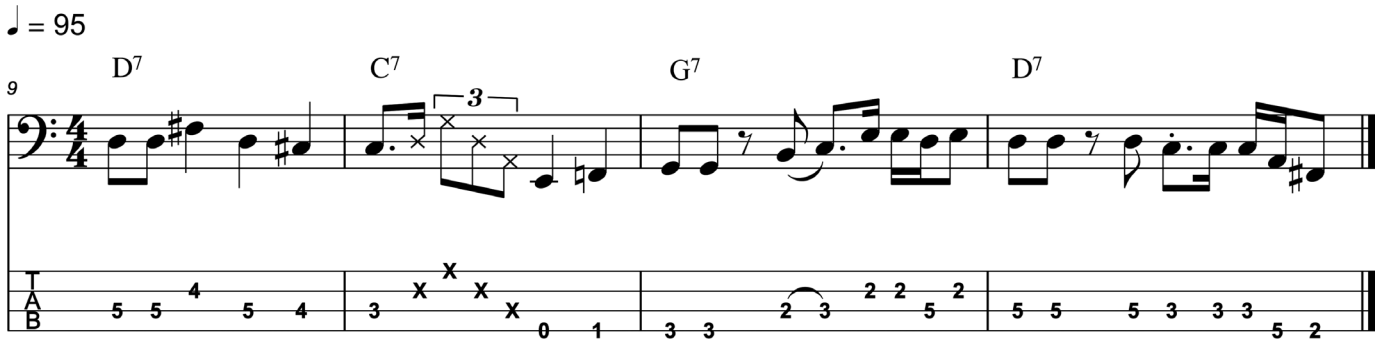
EXERCISE THREE

This motif has been composed from the Mixolydian mode and then synthesised around the previous I7-IV7-V7 progression. As you progress through the measures, ensure that you are sensitive to the the slurs leading into the third beat of each one. Note the 16th note subdivisions on beat four. Acknowledging the dominant and subdominant chords at this point is essential.

EXERCISE FOUR

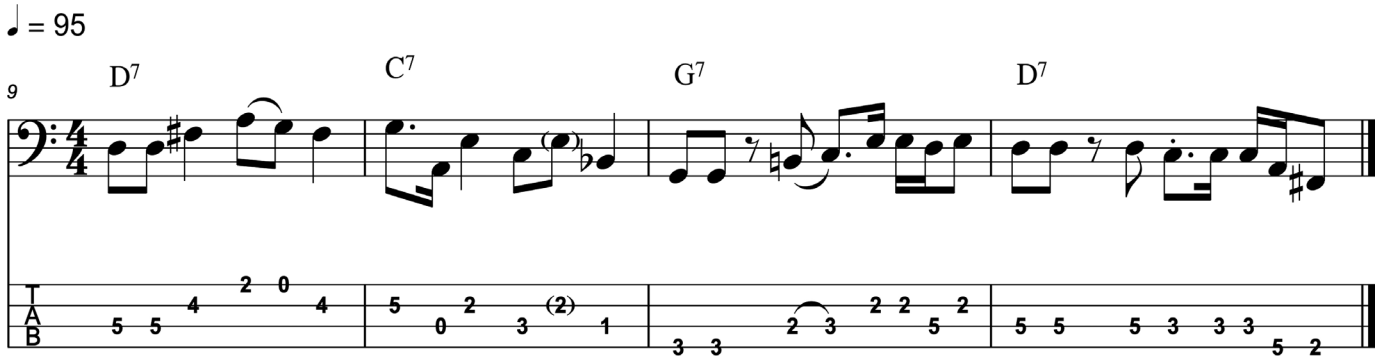
By isolating the final measures of the progression, we can focus on the melodic possibilities between the V7 and IV7 chords in bars nine and 10. Our first example employs a major triad in conjunction with its 6th to portray the V7 chord's ascent to the root of the subdominant. At that point, the motif descends the Mixolydian mode, incorporating a chromatic ♭6th interval.

EXERCISE FIVE



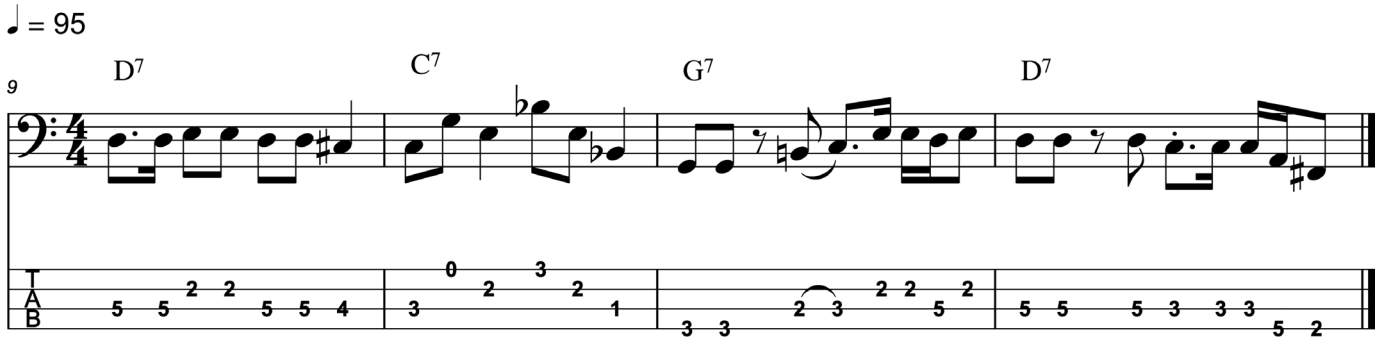
Exercise 5 continues to develop our understanding of V7-IV7 chord changes. In this example, the dominant structure transcends towards the subdominant using the chromatic passing note between the tonic pitches. However, once you arrive at the subdominant structure, you will be required to deliver an eighth note triplet using dead notes. To execute this efficiently, mute the strings with your fretting hand while simultaneously employing a single finger on your plucking hand to drag through the G, D and A strings. You can emulate the required rhythm by saying to yourself '2 & a', or the syllables in the word 'tri-pa-let'.

EXERCISE SIX



By examining the chord tones in our targeted structures, it's possible to develop contrasting ways to transcend between them. In the previous exercise, a chromatic passing note was employed to emphasise the transition between chord types. Semitone passing notes are a particularly effective device, as they produce a beneficial amount of dissonance which can encourage movement within the progression. When passing between the V7 and IV7 structures, the same interval of a semitone occurs between the major 3rd of the V7 chord and the perfect 5th of IV7. This exercise utilises this relationship.

EXERCISE SEVEN



Whenever you wonder which melodic devices to use with dominant 7th chords, it's always worth prioritising the intervals of major 3rd and ♭7th. Although these 'guide tones' are responsible for the majority of the associated sonic textures, when isolated and played in accordance with one another, they generate an interval known as a 'tritone'. You'll find it on the third and fourth beats of bars nine and 10 here.

EXERCISE EIGHT

When a dominant 7th arpeggio is played in first inversion, it produces a diminished triad, which can prove decisive in your portrayal of dominant 7th chords. Thankfully, as this triad commences on the major 3rd it's relatively easy to locate the structure, even in a low register. Bar nine of our penultimate exercise demonstrates this, with a diminished triad portrayed in descending order to further the melodic content.

EXERCISE NINE

All of the information in this month's exercises is part of an ongoing study addressing harmonic movement. Although each lesson can stand alone, it's possible to collate all of the information from this and last month's lessons into one presentation. Our final exercise incorporates some of these insights, gathered from the previous studies of I7–IV7 changes, as well as I7–V7. **See you next time!**

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BASS GUITARS

Heiko Jung
plays Contra 6

Lisa Wulf
plays Votan XS 5

Etienne Mbappe
plays Votan 5

JayTee
plays Votan XS 4

David Pastorius
plays Consat 4

Ariane Cap
plays Consat 6

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THIS MONTH...

NOTE GROUPINGS AND PHRASING

Rich Brown guides us to Advanced level every month. Read on as he takes us to the very top of bass theory!

Groove is not an easy subject to teach, but it's not impossible. One of the best ways to work on your groove is to learn the grooves in the music that you love. For example, try learning bass-lines from some of the real pioneers of funk and soul – Larry Graham, Bootsy Collins, James Jamerson... to name just a few. There's so much information in those lines. By dissecting and analysing those phrases within the lines that make them so incredibly groovin', we can then establish general rules based on those phrases that can apply to almost any musical situation.

Here's a simple example explaining what I mean. The bass-line in the intro and verse of Marvin Gaye's 'What's Going On' is in the key of E major. The line starts on the root (E) and then plays the 5th to the 6th (B to C#) twice. It's beautiful despite its simplicity, but a distinguishing feature of the line is that it uses the 6th (C#) instead of opting for the major 3rd. From this observation, we can create a general rule: the 6th of the scale is

The journey to the summit of bass is tough but rewarding...

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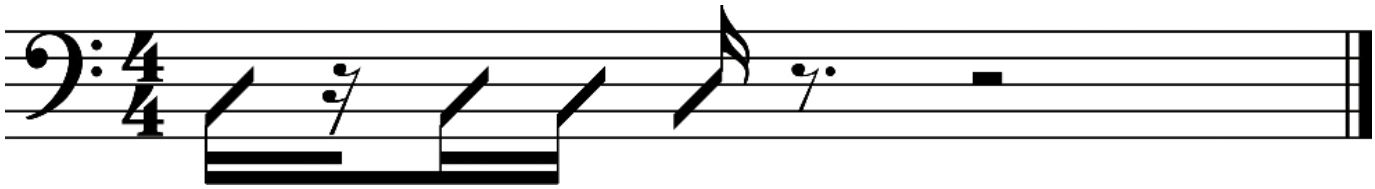
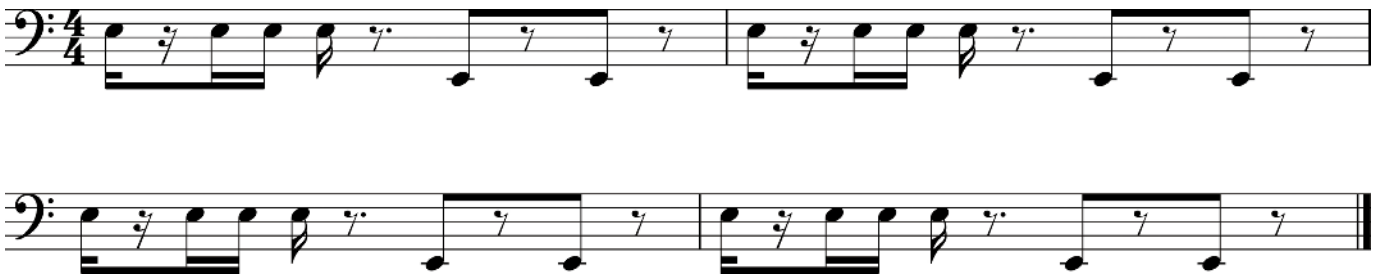
EXERCISE ONE



EXERCISE TWO



EXERCISE THREE

always a viable option when we're creating a bass-line or even improvising a part based on a groove.

As a simple rule, this makes sense, but it's a rule that examines groove from the perspective of harmony. My goal for this lesson is to have you create your own general rules on groove from the perspective of rhythm. We'll achieve this by using short rhythmic phrases and taking them through the bar in increments of 16th notes. This lesson is going to be a fun one. Let's get started!

Everything from changing the number of notes in your rhythmic phrase to moving the rests can drastically alter your exercise

EXERCISE ONE

Exercise 1 is the rhythmic phrase we'll be using for this lesson. You can really work your way down a rabbit hole with this method of practice. Everything from changing the number of notes in your rhythmic phrase. to changing the notes used in your exercise. to moving the rests can drastically alter your exercise.

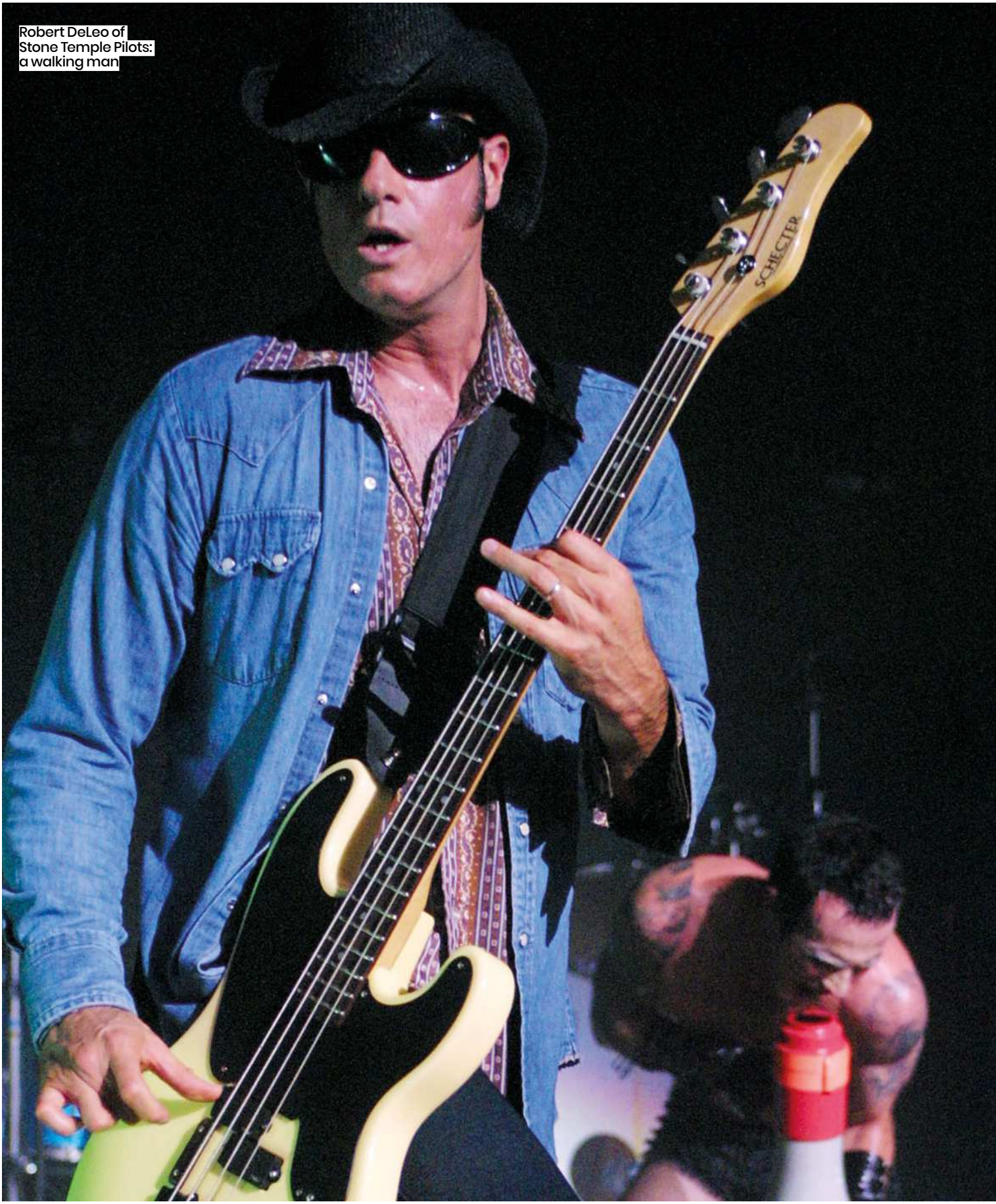
We'll have a look at a few of these here.

EXERCISE TWO

Exercise 2 takes our rhythmic phrase from Exercise 1 and adds quarter notes on beats three and four to complete the bar. It's a pretty simple bass-line, with an almost military sound to it.

EXERCISE THREE

This line is perfectly adequate, but watch what happens in Exercise 3 when we move our rhythmic phrase back by



Robert DeLeo of Stone Temple Pilots: a walking man

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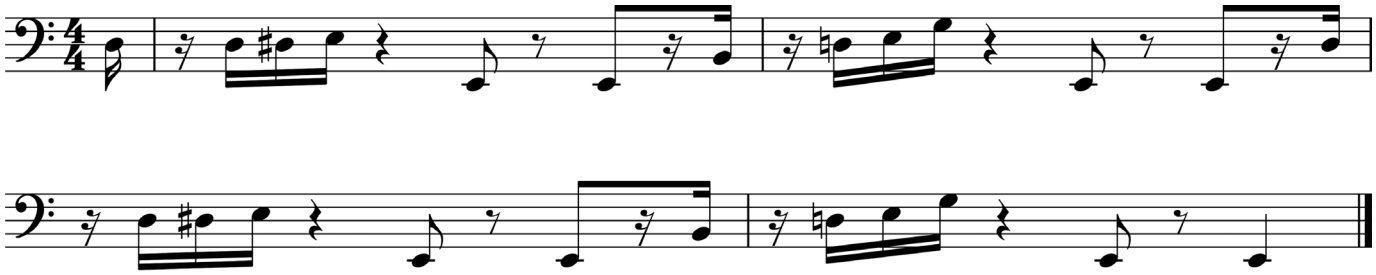
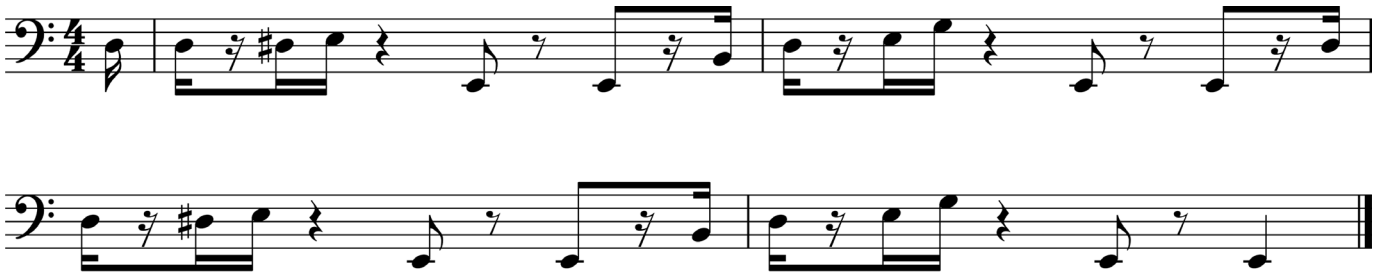
EXERCISE FOUR



EXERCISE FIVE



a 16th note. Suddenly, what once sounded 'military' is now filled with so much funk and soul.

Again, we've only taken the rhythmic phrase from Exercise 1 and moved it back by a 16th note – leaving our quarter notes on beats three and four intact. There's something to be observed from this. Of course, there's a high level of groove that can be achieved using only the downbeats, but there's something to be said for making use of the more syncopated beats of the bar, mainly the 'E' and 'a' of the 16th note subdivision.

In Exercise 3, our rhythmic phrase from Exercise 1 starts on the A note of beat four. We can create a general rule based on these specific syncopations: starting a rhythmic phrase from the 'a' of beat four can raise the level of groove in your bass-line.

EXERCISES FOUR AND FIVE

Exercises 4 and 5 further prove this idea. In Exercise 4, we've taken the same rhythm and changed a few of the notes. It's still a very funky line, but can you see what's happening in Exercise 5?

Record yourself practising these examples, using the variations discussed here, and take note of what you enjoy when listening back

EXERCISE SIX

Here, we've taken our Exercise 1 rhythm and started from the A of beat four, the same as Exercise 4, but we've moved the 16th note rest from the 'E' of one to the 'and' of one. This gives us a new but equally soulful and funky feel to our bass-line. We can keep going with this one idea until the cows come home. Let's now combine some of these phrases.

EXERCISE SEVEN

Have a look at Exercise 7. It looks as if a whole lot is going on here, but upon further examination, we can see that we're still using the same phrases from previous examples. The opening phrase is taken from the beginning of Exercise 4. The second half of bar one in Exercise 7 is taken from the beginning of Exercise 5.

It's this kind of 'groove experimentation' that can lead to exciting discoveries – and likely new challenges – when it comes to your groove. Your ability to play those syncopations will take your groove to the next level, but the experimentation doesn't end there. You can and should play these examples at different tempos, although faster doesn't necessarily mean better. In fact, playing these examples at slower tempos can indeed be a test of your 'pocket' and your versatility.

I recommend recording yourself when you practise these examples, using all of the variations and feel changes discussed in this lesson, and take note of those things you enjoy when you listen back. These are the ideas you can develop with further experimentation. These ideas can also help you create those general rules that stand to assist you in various musical situations.

Just as it is essential to take note of the things that you enjoy when you listen back, it is equally, if not more, important

EXERCISE SIX

EXERCISE SEVEN

to recognise the areas that challenge you the most. For example, are you struggling at slower tempos? Are you struggling at faster tempos? Are you playing behind or ahead of the beat? Listen carefully with honest and discerning ears, and evaluate your playing without being too harsh or too lenient.

My last bit of advice might be the most important. There are so many resources and outlets of information coming at us from all sides. With all the lessons, courses, books and websites imparting information on how you can become a better bass player, it is very easy to feel overwhelmed by it all. But don't be. Take your time. There's no need for you to learn everything at once, and you're not in competition with anyone.

It is far more beneficial to spend one hour of dedicated practice on one or two concepts than it is to spend a week learning several things at once. So try not to get discouraged or put any undue pressure on yourself to be awesome right now. There's no need. Work at your own pace, unapologetically. Remember, you're playing music, which means you should be having fun!

Gaye Advert of The Adverts: punk-rock plucking

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EXPENSIVE MULTI-EFFECTS

Do you really need to blow your savings on effects?

Dan Veall is a session and stage bass player, educator and gear expert and is here to answer your questions. Contact: @DanVeallBassist

It's that time once again! In part three of my epic column about multi-effects units, I'm going to touch on the features that make the top-tier big-league processors rule the (air) waves. I've been very lucky over my career to have road-tested countless rack- and floor-based processors. Who remembers the Yamaha SPX90? The Digitech 2120? The Zoom 9050S? I certainly do. More recently, the TC Electronic G Force and G-System have all been out gigging with me. Today, we have some truly powerful multi-effects units at our disposal.

Will you get on with it? Effects aren't that important.
Shut your piehole! They really are, and here's why. Let's take just two examples – the Neural DSP Quad Cortex and the Line 6 Helix. I'm not here to compare these gizmos, but to help you understand what they can do.

Go on then, if you must.
First, these processors are going on the road. Manufacturers swap plastic shells out for steel or aluminium casings, with connectors upgraded from generic to rugged, combination Neutrik types. You'll find that the footswitches are of a higher quality, too.

All right, we'll bite. What do these footswitches do?
With both the Helix and Quad Cortex, the footswitches have multiple functions. The former are touch-sensitive, supporting access to menus on a full colour screen. With the Quad Cortex, the footswitches are also hardwearing rotary controllers, essentially becoming the knobs we would adjust on an amp or effects pedal. Large, full-colour screens are commonplace – and we're now seeing touch-capable displays, too.

Glass touch-screens on stage? Are you out of your mind?
Like anything, you need to look after your kit! For the worried among us, there are third-party protective covers, like the ones you use on a cellphone, and these screens are tough.

What can these units do that I can't do with separate pedals?
If only I had enough space to cover every function… a subtle hint to the Editor there!

No chance. One page of this nonsense is enough.
Well, let's just say that these units allow you to arrange any effect, amplifier or cabinet in any order, often in multiples. You can change the entire pedalboard at the touch of a single button, mid-song. In this virtual world, you can even plug a bass directly into a speaker cab simulation without using an amp. Capturing the sound of an entire signal path from your guitar, pedals, amplifier, microphones and even the studio console hardware has become a big part of home audio production. This profiling technology has found its way onto top-tier processors.

Can I record with these things?
Nearly all high-spec effects units include a multi-channel USB audio interface. That means that all the delicious tones you've created can be captured by the software of a DAW on all major platforms. You'll be able to plug in studio headphones or audio monitors directly to the device, turning your compact setup in to a powerful studio.

So I can add external devices?
Absolutely. There's no reason not to use your favourite pedals with a multi-effects unit – though at this price point, the effects on board are pretty amazing.

No-one said effects were compulsory, but why not explore as many options as technology affords us?

What else should I consider when trialling a processor?
What do you actually need? Do you need a compact unit to fly-gig with? Do you really need an audio interface, phantom power, effects loops, profiling and multiple effects types? Too many features can sometimes give you option paralysis, while too few may leave you wanting.

Oh great, another problem to solve. Can't I just plug into an amp and rock out?
Of course you can! No-one said that effects were compulsory – but as I see it, we should explore as many options as technology affords us. We play the coolest instrument ever invented: why not make it even cooler?

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